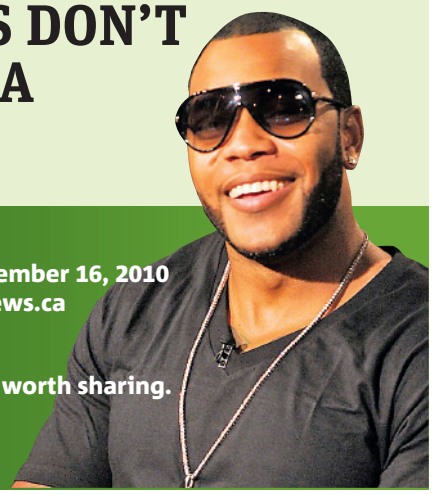
FRIDAY'S JACKPOT
Lotto MAX
$40 MILLION
estimated

NOT MUCH WORK FOR NICHOLSON
UNLESS YOU COUNT LAKER GAMES {page 42}

HUSTLE & FLO
ALBUM SALES DON'T FAZE FLO RIDA
SCENE {page 43}



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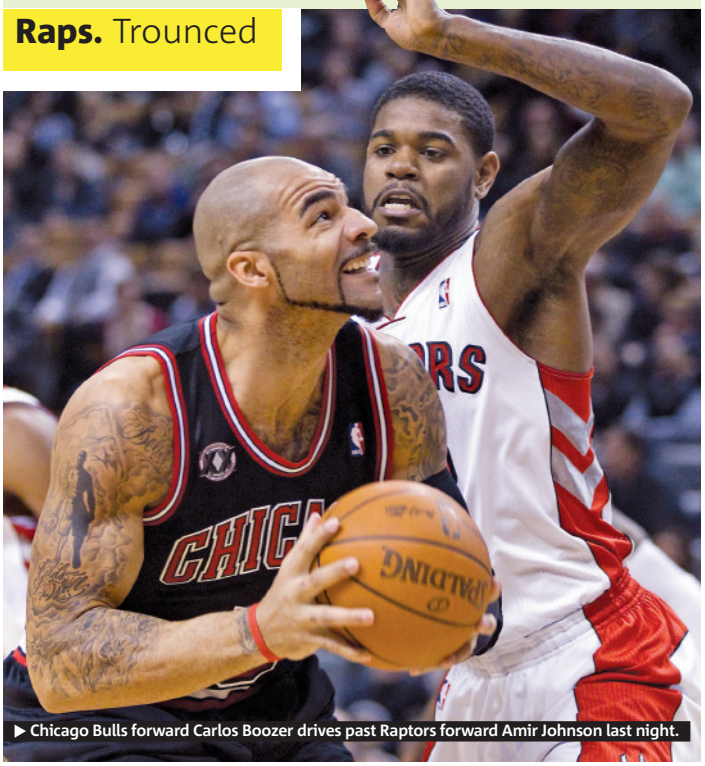

▶ Chicago Bulls forward Carlos Boozer drives past Raptors forward Amir Johnson last night.

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Boozer, Bulls gore Raptors

Carlos Boozer scored 34 points as Chicago beat Toronto 110-93. Andrea Bargnani sat the game out with a sore left knee. Game recap, page 58.

Trouble brewing at your party?

Alcohol and co-workers do not always mix {page 6}

U.S. files suit against BP

Obama administration sues over Gulf oil spill {page 14}

Ham over turkey this holiday?

▶ What better time than the festive season to hone your comedic talents ▶ Joke-telling skills take practice

Do you wish you could be a holiday ham? The one who tells jokes at the office or neighbourhood party that actually make people laugh?

Your efforts at humour can bring the ho ho hos you crave, if you follow expert advice.

As a professor with Humber College's Comedy Program, Larry Horowitz has taught at least 3,000 people to be funny and says he's never met anyone who couldn't successfully tell a joke.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

"These days, political correctness is number 1," Horowitz says. Making jokes that involve sex, race or religion can be hazardous at the corporate Christmas party, or anywhere for that matter. Limit your humour to safe targets unless you know your listeners very well.

MAKE THE JOKE YOUR OWN

Speak clearly and don't rush or nobody will understand you.

"We have a saying in the business that it's 90 per cent delivery," Horowitz says.

"When you tell your joke you want to make it interesting and stop the person who's hearing it from suddenly realizing they know this joke halfway through.

"If you want to avoid all that, rephrase the joke. Try to make it your own."

KEEP IT SHORT — OR NOT

The only exception is if you're telling a "shaggy dog story," which Horowitz describes as an almost frustratingly long joke topped off with an idiotic punchline. "The end is usually so stupid that there's a great relief, and that joke works on contrast, it works on the amount of time you invested to hear such a stupid ending."

UNDERSELL THE PUNCHLINE

"The worst thing you can ever do is tell people 'this is the funniest joke you've ever heard,'" Horowitz advises. "It couldn't possibly live up to the billing." The principle also works in reverse, which can be handy if you're not sure your joke's that funny.

"The best thing you can do is preface it: 'This is the worst joke you've ever heard,' and it's never as bad as you made it out to be and it works better."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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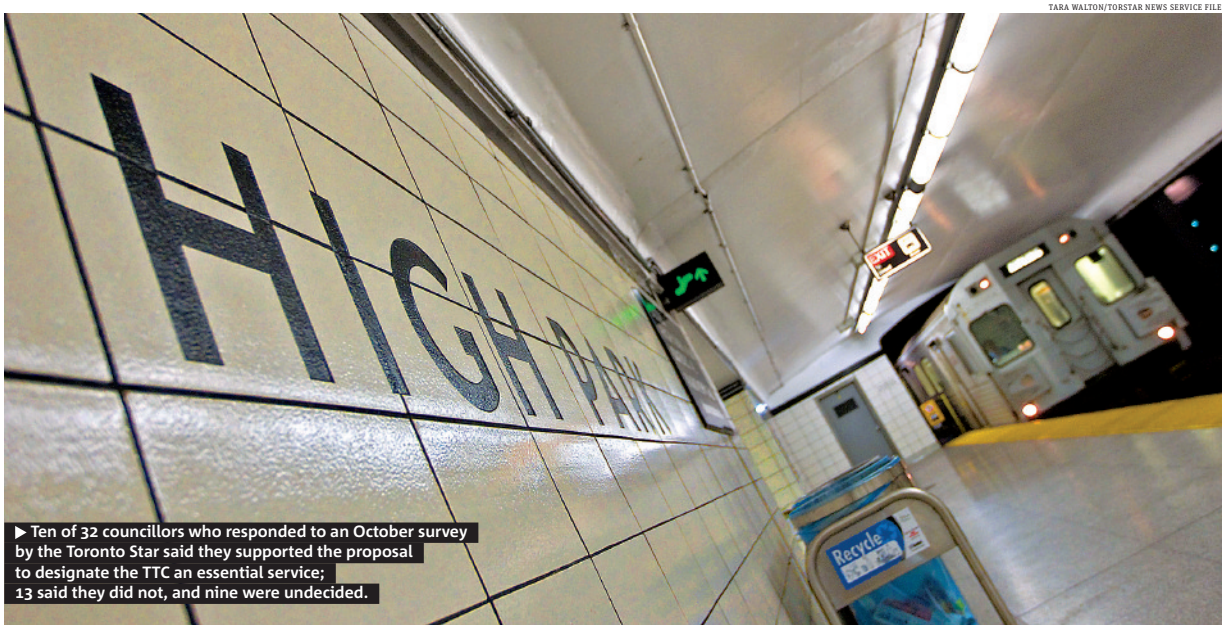

▶ Ten of 32 councillors who responded to an October survey by the Toronto Star said they supported the proposal to designate the TTC an essential service; 13 said they did not, and nine were undecided.

Ford faces first test of pledges

Dropping vehicle tax, slashing office budgets nearly certain of victory ◐ Hat trick tougher since making TTC an essential service difficult to swallow for many councillors, survey found

At the first substantial city council meeting of his tenure, Mayor Rob Ford will seek today to win council support for three prominent campaign pledges: Slashing councillors' office budgets; abolishing the vehicle registration tax; and asking the province to declare the TTC an essential service.

Ford may not face much of a fight on the first two proposals. The thorny essential-service question, however, represents his first major test: Even the man who is now his deputy mayor, Coun. Doug Holyday, split with him on the issue in 2008.

DECLARING THE TTC AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE:

Ford wants council to ask the provincial government to designate the TTC an essential service. The designation, already applied to police and fire services, would deny TTC workers the right to strike.

Council rejected a similar proposal by one vote in 2008.

Proponents say the TTC is critical to the functioning of the city. Opponents say the tag would hurt taxpayers, since unresolved labour disputes would be settled by arbitrators whose decisions are frequently friendlier to workers than negotiated collective agreements.

CUTTING OFFICE BUDGETS:

As a councillor, the independently wealthy Ford habitually claimed none or almost none of his office budget. As mayor, he is asking councillors to endorse the frugal spirit on which he made his name. His proposal: Chopping office budgets to $30,000 from $50,445.

The reduction was one of the central planks of the stop-the-gravy-train portion of Ford's campaign platform, and it is widely expected to pass — though it has not gone unchallenged.

TANNIS TOOHEY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ Rob Ford

ELIMINATING THE VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAX:

The tax, implemented in 2008, charges drivers $60 per year to register their cars. Ford wants to scrap it for Jan. 1.

According to city staff, eliminating the tax would cost $64 million in revenue next year. Councillors have pressed Ford to explain how he plans to make up the shortfall, and some — including Ford's budget chief, Mike Del Grande — have said the tax would most fairly be eliminated on its three-year anniversary in September.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 news

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Don Cherry, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford and the politics of class warfare. More at metronews.ca/spindoctor

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Tech. Winners

▶ Students from the Crosby Heights Public School movie club received an early Christmas gift yesterday when their school was named one of 10 winners of Best Buy Canada's 2010 Best in Class Fund technology grant program.

SALVATORE SACCO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Christmas comes early for school

Students worked with teachers at Richmond Hill's Crosby Heights Public School to create a video about how they would incorporate technology in the classroom and were rewarded with a $20,000 Best Buy gift card. Sunny View Junior and Senior Public School of Toronto was one of five schools to win a $10,000 technology grant.

Youth do their part for North York food bank

DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ Coun. Josh Colle.

In what's becoming an annual tradition, many families and classrooms in northern Toronto are spending part of the holidays sorting food for people facing hunger.

"This month, children, their parents and other volunteers join us in our warehouse to sort food for people in need," said Anette Chawla, the executive director of the North York Harvest Food Bank, which provides food assistance to 60 programs, including pre- and post-natal programs and women's shelters.

"Each year, we see families and teachers bring their children here," she said. "While providing valuable help in the warehouse, the children learn about how communities are tackling hunger and poverty."

North York Harvest, a not-for-profit organization, is in the middle of its winter food drive, the largest of the year. Last year, families and individuals in northern Toronto needed 160,000 hampers of food — nearly 1.5-million pounds — from the food bank. Children and youth make up nearly 40 per cent of those served by the charity's programs.

"It's as important as ever that we give," said Josh Colle, a councillor (Eglinton-Lawrence) who helped launch the food drive. "We want to make sure that we're taking care of families and babies."

The goals are 200,000 pounds of food and $200,000 before Jan. 4.

North York Harvest is asking Torontonians to donate food or cash by calling 416-635-7771 or visiting northyorkharvest.com.

METRO

For more news, visit metronews.ca/toronto

Schools can keep private daycare deals: Premier

Before- and after-school programs are a key component of the Liberals' full-day kindergarten plan

Ontario won't force its school boards to cancel deals with private daycare providers as they try to roll out the government's ambitious full-day learning plan, Premier Dalton McGuinty said yesterday.

Rather than kick out groups that are already providing before- and after-school care, school boards will be able to keep them if they don't want to set up their own extended day programs, he said.

But those third-party groups will have to use the government's curriculum and provide care "on site" in schools, the premier added.

McGuinty was forced to clarify his plans amid reports that his government was about to scrap plans for boards to run the extended day programs.

But extended day programs will only be offered in schools where there is sufficient parental demand, McGuinty said yesterday.

"We heard from some parents about concerns about us taking away their early childhood educator, taking away a program that they already had confidence in. They didn't want that to be broken up." PREMIER DALTON MCGUINTY

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tims brew a click away in U.S.

Coffee drinkers who love the brew served by Tim Hortons can get their caffeine fix anywhere in the United States with the opening of an online store, the retailer has announced.

Tim Hortons, which serves two-billion cups of coffee a year at its North American restaurants, will sell its ground coffee, boxed tea, various travel mugs and insulated coffee carriers at shopus.timhortons.com.

David McMullen, vice-president of U.S. marketing, indicated the site is a response to the calls and emails the company has received from U.S. residents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Funding guidelines questioned

The country's aid groups are questioning the standards by which the Canadian International Development Agency awards funding after a series of what they call questionable decisions.

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation points to a decision to cut support to Toronto-based KAIROS, or Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, a church-based NGO that addresses human-rights issues.

International Co-operation Minister Bev Oda said it was her decision alone to discontinue funding for KAIROS, in spite of CIDA's recommendation that funding continue.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Murder warrant issued

Peel regional police say a first-degree murder warrant has been issued for a Toronto man in connection with a fatal shooting last month in Mississauga.

Donald Richard Grant, 27, of Toronto died in hospital after being shot Nov. 7 at a hotel near Pearson International Airport.

Police say a Canada-wide warrant has been issued for Jerome Derby, 20, described as black, approximately five-feet-nine and 140 pounds, with a slim build, brown eyes and brown hair.

Derby is considered armed and dangerous, and police say he should not be approached.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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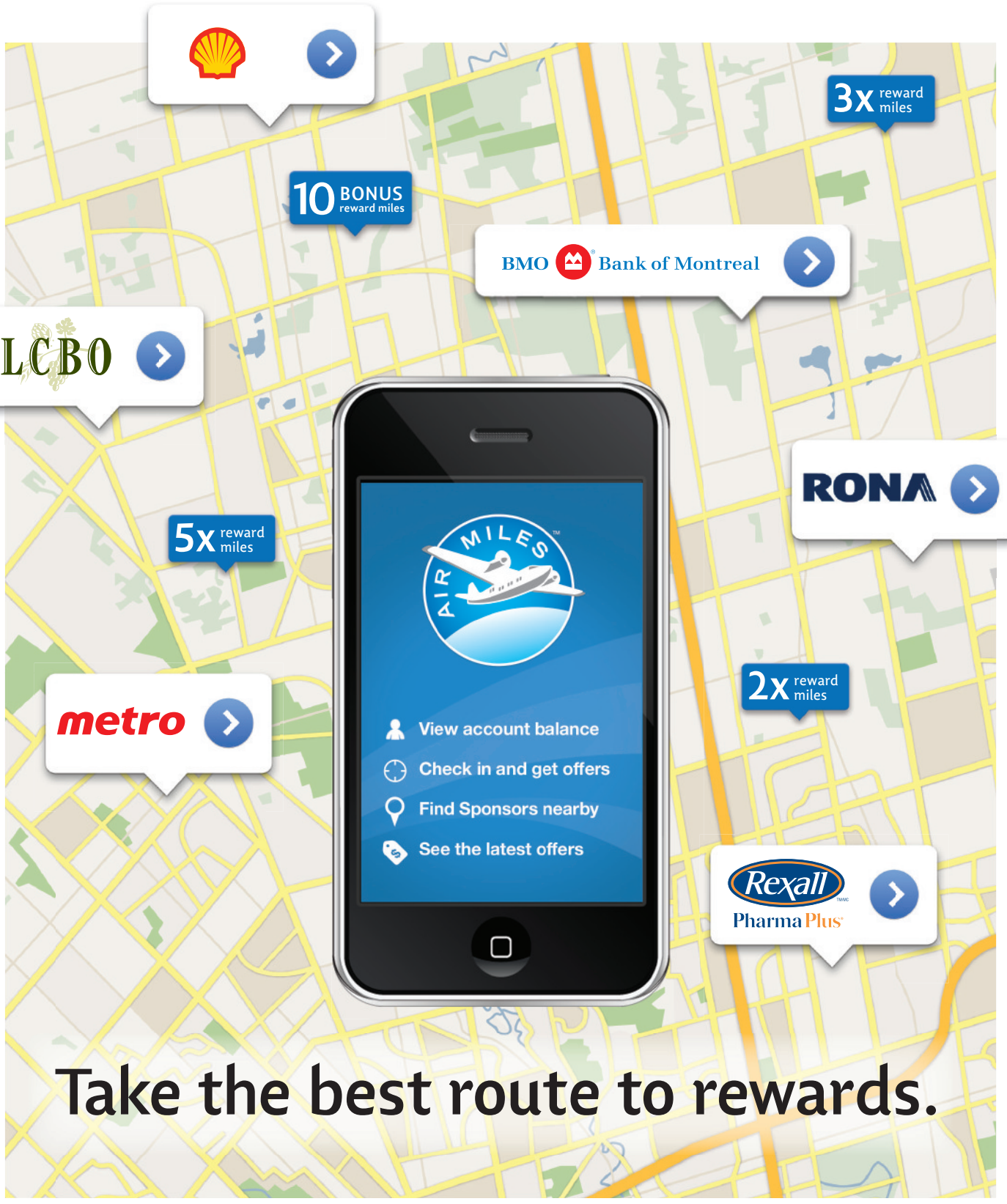

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GTA

Fire ravages Milton townhouse

A Milton home burned for more than three hours yesterday afternoon after a gas explosion in the home, police said.

The fire started just after 2 p.m. and burned until 5:30 p.m. in a house on Bennett Boulevard, just south of Clarke Boulevard.

"That house doesn't look good," said Halton Police Sgt. Brian Carr. "There's going to be a large amount of damage to it, if not destroyed."

The home is a corner unit at the end of a row of townhouses, but firefighters were able to prevent the fire from spreading.

Officials are still working to determine what caused the fire, but Carr said that Union Gas was in the house at the time of the explosion.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ontario wants credit for credit: Document

TANYA TALAGA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ Premier Dalton McGuinty's government has issued a communiqué instructing local utilities to amend customers' bills so as to explain that a 10 per cent reduction in monthly charges comes courtesy of the province's new Ontario Clean Energy Benefit.

Clean Energy Benefit designed to offset expected 46% increase in electricity costs over next five years

Ontario's government is forcing utilities to tout the 10 per cent electricity discount on hydro bills every month for the next five years, Torstar News Service has learned.

Over the next few weeks, millions of households, farms and small businesses will begin receiving the new Ontario Clean Energy Benefit on their monthly hydro bills.

To ensure all 4.4 million electricity customers know where the reduction is coming from — with an election coming in 2011 — the Liberals have also ordered all local electricity distributors to include a special "buck slip" in bills explaining the program.

"Upgrading and modernizing our infrastructure is helping to provide reliable power to our homes and businesses. Building more clean energy is also creating thousands of jobs for Ontarians in our growing renewable energy industries, like solar, wind and hydroelectric," it says.

While the government is footing the printing tab for the millions of buck slips, officials at local utilities are privately more miffed about another edict from Premier Dalton McGuinty's administration.

Actual savings

- The price break would save a homeowner using 800 kilowatt hours (kWh) a month $153.60 a year.
- A small business using 10,000 kWh monthly would save $1,716 a year.
- A farm using 12,000 kWh a month would save $2,052.

Every month for the five-year duration of the 10 per cent discount program, they will have to include the following on all bills:

"A line to be added, at an appropriate location on the bill among the itemized charges, which will reflect the reduction, including the actual amount saved: Ontario Clean Energy Benefit (–10%)," according to a leaked communiqué.

"A message to be added to the bill, where conservation or other utility messages to consumers is usually placed: The Ontario Government has taken 10% off your electricity bill to help you with the costs of building a clean energy future."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Booze, workers make volatile mix

It's not as dangerous as drinking and driving, but the festive season brings another perilous combination that can have serious or at least seriously embarrassing consequences — alcohol and employees at the holiday office party.

Employers have become much more careful in recent years about how they mix staff and spirits, says Jordan Fogle, CEO of The Mint Agency, a Toronto-based event planning company. But nobody's found the perfect solution yet.

More than 12 years as an event planner, Fogle has seen everything "from people throwing up on CEOs to falling down staircases to breaking things in venues."

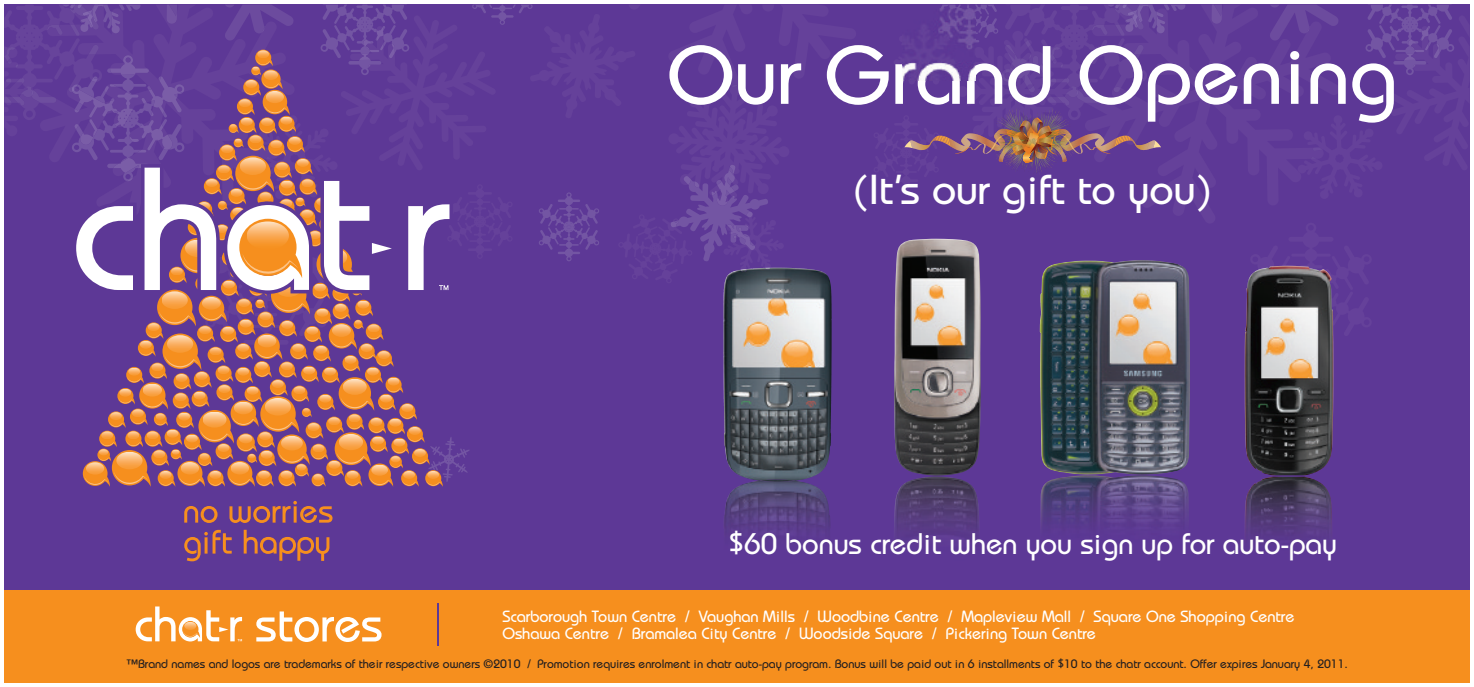
"You don't get fights and things at holiday parties, you just get people who have had a little bit too much to drink and end up making fools out of themselves."

"Inevitably you've always got that one person who's going to get fired the next day or definitely wishes they never showed up to the party. There's always one in every crowd."
JORDAN FOGLE, EVENT PLANNER

The consequences include embarrassment, drycleaning costs and even lawsuits.

"Negligence liability and sexual harassment liability — those are the two things you see most often," says lawyer Susan Sorensen of Borden Ladner Gervais, a firm that specializes in labour and employment law.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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OPP/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Sonia Varaschin

FBI profilers called in

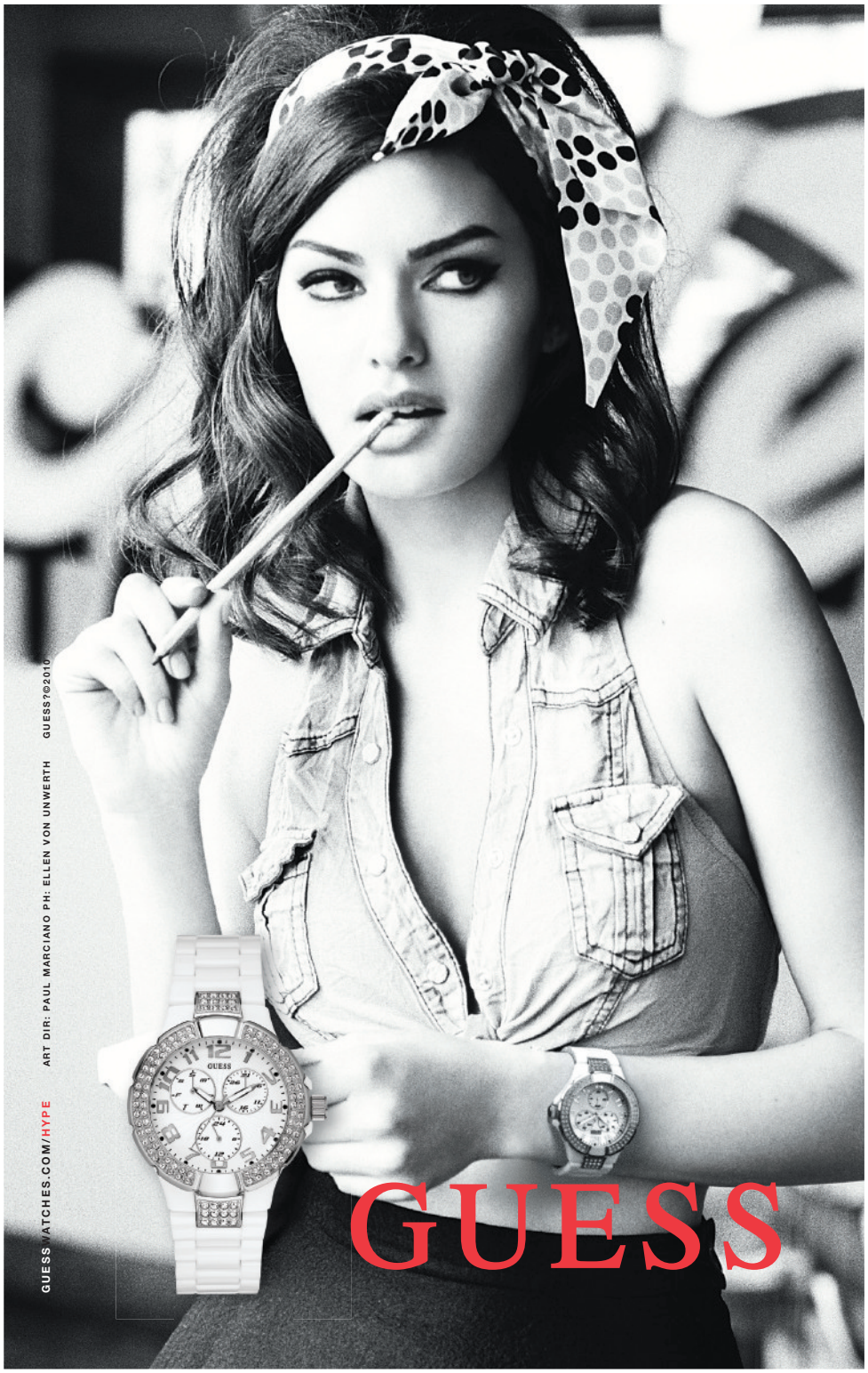
OPP says U.S. Behavioural Analysis Unit assisting with investigation into murder of Sonia Varaschin ◐ News conference to be held today

Ontario Provincial Police say the FBI is helping investigators in the case of murdered Orangeville woman Sonia Varaschin.

The 42-year-old nurse was reported missing in August, and her body was found in a wooded area a few days later.

The OPP says criminal profilers from the FBI's Behavioural Analysis Unit in Virginia recently met with investigators on the case — along with experts from the OPP and RCMP.

The "investigative summit" also included senior homicide detectives from the provincial police force as well as from the York Region, Ottawa and Toronto forces. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**



Council urged to condemn Maclean's 'Asian' headline

KARENSUN.CA

▶ Karen Sun

Toronto's reputation will be "tarnished" if city council doesn't demand that Maclean's magazine apologize for a story about universities headlined "Too Asian?", says the Chinese Canadian National Council.

Karen Sun, executive director of the council's Toronto office, made the remark at a press conference at City Hall yesterday in support of a motion from Coun. Mike Layton, seconded by Coun. Kristyn Wong-Tam.

"It doesn't cost the city anything to support this kind of motion to reaffirm its commitment to diversity and inclusion but I do think it will tarnish the city's reputation if this motion doesn't pass, as a city that uses 'Diversity our Strength' as its motto," Sun said.

The story, published last month as part of Maclean's big-selling edition that ranks Canadian universities, suggests some non-Asian students are avoiding schools they consider "Asian" — "so academically focused that some students feel they can no longer compete or have fun."

Amid criticism that focused heavily on the headline, Maclean's changed it online to "The enrolment controversy," ran an editorial saying it is sorry for any offence taken and has agreed, the CCNC says, to run a rebuttal article.

But the group, and others including the Toronto Federation of Chinese Parents, say Maclean's needs to issue a full, unreserved apology for the story and headline, arguing it continues a stereotype of "perpetual foreigners" stealing school spots from real Canadians.

Layton needs two-thirds of council to support a bid to get his motion — that council "disassociate itself from the views expressed by Maclean's ... and request that Maclean's apologize unreservedly for the negative stereotyping of the Asian-Canadian community" — debated.

"It's personal," he told the news conference. "This statement and this offensive headline was offensive to my neighbours, to my constituents," and to the "multi-ethnic" household in which he grew up.

Layton's stepmother, Trinity-Spadina NDP MP Olivia Chow, has tabled a similar motion in the House of Commons. Vancouver council on Tuesday followed Victoria's lead in calling on Maclean's to apologize.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Priority?

- Asked if the motion flies in the face of Mayor Rob Ford's determination to bring council back to the business of customer service and improving core services, Coun. Mike Layton said the issue shouldn't take much time and won't prevent core services from being discussed.
- He noted colleague Mark Grimes wants council to debate a motion congratulating Cincinnati Reds first baseman Joey Votto, a Richview Collegiate grad, for being named the most valuable National League player in 2010.

Rengel's killer loses sentence appeal

David Bagshaw was just four days shy of his 18th birthday when he lured Stefanie Rengel from her Toronto home in 2008 and fatally stabbed her six times

HO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

David Bagshaw

An adult prison sentence is appropriate for a young man who stabbed 14-year-old Stefanie Rengel to death in exchange for sex with his girlfriend, Ontario's highest court ruled yesterday.

David Bagshaw pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 10 years — the maximum penalty for a 17-year-old offender being sentenced as an adult.

Bagshaw appealed the sentence, arguing the maximum youth sentence of 10 years, in addition to his 21 months spent in pretrial custody, was more fitting.

The Ontario Court of Appeal dismissed the case.

"I think the court recognized that David was someone who was very immature and frail at the time that he did this, but the offence was just of such a nature that they could not see their way through to allowing the appeal," said his lawyer, Delmar Doucette.

"We're very disappointed with the decision. This is one of those horrible, tragic cases."

Melissa Todorovic, Rengel's 15-year-old girlfriend at the time, was sentenced as an adult to life with no chance of parole for seven years — the maximum adult sentence for someone her age.

The trial judge said Bagshaw and Todorovic had a sexual relationship "marked by mutual obsession and jealousy" that culminated in Bagshaw killing Rengel after months of pressure from Todorovic, who mistakenly saw Rengel as her rival.

Psychiatrists have reported Bagshaw is at a substantial risk to violently reoffend. He has a long history of anger issues, anti-social behaviour and aggression that continued even during his incarceration, the Crown said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lawyer left to crack motorbike theft alone

"We do not want citizens to do their own investigations. It is our job to do."
INSP. HOWIE PAGE

When Ehsan Ghebrai's bright orange 2004 Kawasaki Ninja was stolen last week from the underground parking garage of his downtown condominium, the 28-year-old defence lawyer called Toronto police.

"It was my baby," he said of the motorcycle he bought for $7,000.

He called 52 Division. A police officer, Ghebrai said, told him they didn't have the resources to send an investigator but that he should ask for surveillance footage.

The officer also suggested that Ghebrai talk to the last owner — maybe he knew something — and to take a walk around the neighbourhood to see if the thief dumped it nearby.

Building security officers, meanwhile, told Ghebrai they only release security camera footage to police. He provided them with an occurrence number given to him by the 52 Division officer and that is the last he heard.

Insp. Howie Page of 52 Division was surprised to hear about what Ghebrai told the Toronto Star.

While police try to dispatch officers to investigate the theft of big-ticket items, it isn't always possible but there should be a detective assigned to the case, he said, adding he will look into it.

The TPS has a policy of sending an officer to every reported break-and-enter, Page added.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Chronic pain affects 10% of younger Canadians: StatsCan

Chronic pain is often associated with getting older, but new figures indicate that about 10 per cent of those aged 12 to 44 also experience extreme aches and discomfort.

Figures from Statistics Canada released yesterday show that nine per cent of males in this age group and 12 per cent of females reported chronic pain in 2007-2008.

The prevalence is relatively low among those in the 12-to-17 age group, but rises to 14 per cent of males and 17 per cent of females in those aged 35 to 44.

People in households where no one had graduated from high school were almost twice as likely to report chronic pain as those in households with at least one post-secondary graduate.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Vehicle recalls for three automakers

Ford expands recall over rear axle concerns Chrysler recalls minivans over airbags Volkswagens recalled over windshield wiper fluid tank

Ford Motor Co. joined two other automakers, Volkswagen and Chrysler, yesterday in announcing vehicle recalls that affect drivers in Canada.

In Ford's case, the announcement involves the expansion of an existing recall of 575,000 older-model Windstars over concerns that their rear axles can corrode and break.

The initial recall, which was announced in August, has now been expanded to include an additional 37,000 minivans, bringing the total number of Windstars covered to 612,000 in the United States and Canada.

Ford spokesman Wes Sherwood said 8,000 Canadian vehicles are included in the expanded recall.

The Chrysler and Volkswagen recalls involve a combined 87,000 vehicles in Canada.

Chrysler Canada issued a recall of more than 50,000 minivans because of a problem that can cause the airbag to accidentally deploy.

The recall, part of a larger U.S. recall of more than 360,000 vans, covers Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country 2008 models.

Chrysler said it will inspect and replace heating, ventilation and air conditioning drain hose parts that may have been improperly installed on some vehicles.

The issue could cause moisture to collect on the floor and damage the airbag deployment module, but Chrysler said it was not aware of any crashes caused by the issue.

Volkswagen Canada recalled about 37,000 vehicles due to a potential problem with the windshield wiper fluid tank that could lead to a fire.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Too late

The Associated Press spoke with the family of a Massachusetts man killed when the rear axle on his vehicle cracked in half, sending the vehicle careening into a building.

- Sean Bowman's family members said yesterday that they received a safety recall notice from Ford in October, one week after the fatal accident and claimed Ford had not done enough to tell owners of the recall.
- Ford declined to comment.

THEFT

11 guns stolen from Oshawa home

Durham Region police say 11 guns have been stolen from a residence in Oshawa.

Police say a homeowner on Windsor Street discovered yesterday that the guns, including eight rifles and three handguns, had been stolen.

Ammunition and jewelry are also missing.

The stolen guns include a Mauser 1948 Yugoslavian short rifle, a Colt semi-automatic rifle and CZ Tactical semi-automatic rifle.

Police say all of the guns were registered and properly stored.

Investigators are appealing to the public for information about the thefts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Premier rejects snow tire rebate

MARIANNE TAKACS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ Faye Lyons

As snowstorms battered many parts of Ontario this week, safety advocates were pushing for a tax rebate for winter tires, an idea Premier Dalton McGuinty flatly rejected yesterday — even as he recommended drivers use snow tires.

The Canadian Automobile Association and the Ontario Safety League joined with the Ontario Hospital Association and the Ontario Trucking Association to propose a $25 tax credit for each snow tire purchased.

Encouraging more drivers to use actual snow tires would reduce the number of accidents and serious injuries, saving the province millions in health-care costs, said the CAA's Faye Lyons.

"We're here today to remind (Premier McGuinty) and the government this is not just about safer roads and safer families," said Lyons.

"It's about reduced congestion, a better economy and reduced costs to the health-care system, so really it's a win-win-win across the board and should be looked at."

Statistics from Quebec, where snow tires are mandatory, show 10 per cent of motorists who don't have them are responsible for about 40 per cent of accidents in the province.

Less than 50 per cent of Ontario cars are equipped with snow tires, according to the Rubber Association of Canada.

However, McGuinty feels drivers shouldn't need a tax incentive to make the switch to snow tires in winter months.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ONTARIO IN STORM RECOVERY, PAGE 12

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Musicians, artists and athletes — all made an impact in Toronto in 2010.

Torontonians derailed the gravy train by electing Rob Ford as mayor in a landslide, while rapper-singer Drake became one of the most sought-after collaborators in music.

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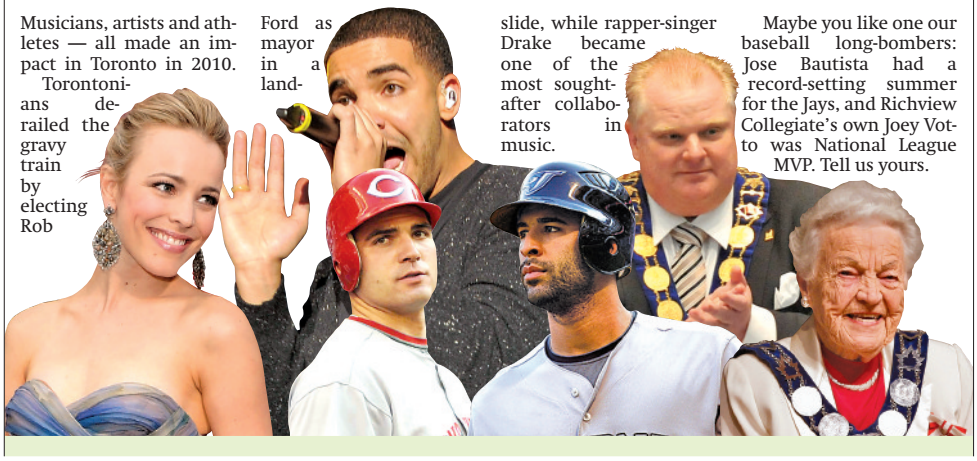

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Tory aides tried to block access to papers: Docs

In case dealing with report on asbestos, minister's office highlighted material it did not want released

Two more Conservative staffers in the office of cabinet minister Christian Paradis tried to block the release of access-to-information documents, The Canadian Press has learned.

In October, Paradis adviser Sebastien Togneri resigned after it was revealed he had meddled in at least three different access-to-information requests while with the Public Works Department. Those incidents are the subject of an investigation by the information commissioner.

But two more policy advisers within Paradis' office were also involved in dealing with records destined for public release under access-to-information legislation.

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Christian Paradis

Documents obtained by The Canadian Press show that Marc Toupin and Jillian Andrews both argued against the release of material on sensitive subjects.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's chief of staff, Guy Giorno, issued a memo to all political staff in February, reminding them of the content of the Access to Information Act.

"No political staff has authority to make access-to-information decisions," Giorno wrote.

Paradis, now natural resources minister, was asked in October about other staff in his office who might have intervened in access requests, but did not directly answer the question.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Sexting' students heating up cellphones

Cellphone sex-texting in some high schools is worrying police.

Police in London, Ont., say students have taken sexual photos of themselves and sent them to friends via cellphones.

Often, the photos were then forwarded to others.

Police are warning students to be aware that even if they don't think a photo will be seen by the general public, it likely will be viewed by many people on both cellphones and the Internet.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Danger zone

- It's called "sexting," and it has touched the lives of sports stars such as Tiger Woods and Brett Favre.
- Police warn that the possession, distribution or production of any photo of a sexual nature of a person under 18 constitutes child pornography.

GLENN OGILVIE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ A tow truck operator works to free a transport truck from a snowbank near Sarnia.

CLEANUP ON THE 402

ARE TOWING FIRMS CLEANING UP, TOO?

After spending a day or more trapped on snow-swept Highway 402, some people say they are suffering sticker shock when they get their vehicle back.

Ontario's Minister of Community Safety says he is "very concerned" by reports some people are being "overcharged considerably" by towing companies.

Vehicles stranded on the highway east of Sarnia are being removed by private towing companies and Jim Bradley said people have complained of charges up to $400 to get their car back.

Bradley said a standard towing charge would be about $55.

Bradley said people can complain to the Ministry of Consumer Services at 1-800-889-9768.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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News in brief

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec fights alimony ruling

QUEBEC CITY. The Quebec government is to appeal a lower-court ruling that paves the way for common-law spouses to obtain alimony.

The Quebec Court of Appeal ruled last month that a provision in the Civil Code discriminates against common-law spouses.

Justice Minister Jean-Marc Fournier, above, says the province wants the Supreme Court of Canada to hear its appeal of that decision.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Israelis build new housing

JERUSALEM. Israeli settlers say they are building new housing at a religious school on the Mount of Olives, despite international criticism of Israeli construction in an area claimed by Palestinians. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Diocese faces sex allegation

ANTIGONISH, N.S. A Hamilton, Ont., man, now 69, has filed a lawsuit against Nova Scotia's Roman Catholic Diocese of Antigonish, alleging a former priest sexually abused him as a child. He claims the alleged abuse started when he was 11.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Scan code for updates on a landmark B.C. court case examining polygamy.

Billions at stake in Gulf oil spill lawsuit

- Washington sues BP and eight other companies
- Explosion killed 11 workers and polluted vast area

The U.S. Justice Department yesterday sued British Petroleum and eight other companies involved in the Gulf oil spill disaster.

It's seeking to recover billions of dollars from the largest offshore spill in U.S. history.

The Barack Obama administration's lawsuit asks that the companies be held liable without limitation under the Oil Pollution Act for all removal costs and damages caused by the oil spill, including damages to natural resources.

The lawsuit also seeks civil penalties under the Clean Water Act.

"We intend to prove these violations caused or contributed to the massive oil spill," said Attorney General Eric Holder.

CHARLIE RIEDEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ This pelican was caught in the oil spill off the Louisiana coast.

The amount of damages and the extent of injuries sustained by the U.S. as a result of the spill are not yet fully known, the lawsuit states.

An explosion that killed 11 workers at BP's Macondo well last April led to oil spewing from the company's undersea well — more than 200 million gallons in all by the government's estimate. BP disputes the figure.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. case

The Justice Department filed the lawsuit in federal court in New Orleans.

- **Allegations:** The lawsuit alleges that safety and operating regulations were violated in the period leading up to April 20. It says the defendants failed to keep the Macondo well under control during that period and failed to use the best available and safest drilling technology to monitor the well's conditions.
- **Liability:** Democratic Rep. Edward J. Markey, a member of the House energy panel that is investigating the spill, acknowledged the government will have a tough fight on its hands since BP has already taken an aggressive stance regarding its liability.

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WikiLeaks founder back in jail

Appeal by Swedish authorities to be heard today Supporters say charges are politically motivated

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange spent another day in a British prison yesterday, after court officials said an appeal against the decision to grant him bail would not be heard for another 24 hours.

On Tuesday, a judge ordered Assange released on 200,000 pounds ($316,000) bail, but Swedish prosecutors challenged the decision. Assange has spent a week in prison following his surrender to British police over a Swedish sex-crimes warrant.

He denies any wrongdoing but has refused to voluntarily surrender to Sweden's request to extradite him. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Allegations

Assange is accused of rape, molestation and unlawful coercion by two women in Sweden for separate incidents that occurred last August.

- **Assange's lawyers** say the allegations stem from a dispute over "consensual but unprotected sex" and argue that he has offered to make himself available for questioning via video link or in person in Britain.
- **Lawyer Gemma Lindfield,** acting for Sweden, rejected attempts to link Assange's case with the work of WikiLeaks.

Economic. Superpowers

▶ Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao arrives in New Delhi yesterday for a three-day visit to India.

GURINDER OSAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China befriends India

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao began a visit to India yesterday intended to build trust between two Asian powers with increasingly close economic ties despite ongoing competition for regional influence.

N.B. flood victims to receive support

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

New Brunswick promised financial assistance yesterday for people whose homes and businesses were swamped by floods after days of rain caused rivers to breach their banks. People in the province are now contending with dropping temperatures. Premier David Alward said he spoke with Keith Ashfield, the federal cabinet representative for New Brunswick, about the possibility of financial relief. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"We'll be moving as a province and working with the federal government on joint support."
N.B. PREMIER DAVID ALWARD

Woman admits to fake assault

A meteorologist on ABC's local New York City station has been suspended after police say she made up claims she was assaulted in Central Park.

Police say Heidi Jones told them Nov. 24 that a man had tried to rape her as she ran in Central Park, and later tried to assault her outside her apartment. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Misdemeanour

- **Jones admitted** she fabricated the story.
- **She was given** a ticket for misdemeanour charges for filing a false report.
- **Jones' attorney,** Paul Callan, says she will plead not guilty to the charges.

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*These savings offers exclude items with prices ending in .97 & .88, Catalogue and online purchases, work boots, Nike® boots, women's outerwear & activewear, men's dresswear & currently advertised items. While quantities last. **Second item must be of equal or lesser value and must accompany any returns

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Sears

It's a boy for Guergis, Jaffer

Independent one of only a few MPs who have given birth while in office ◆ Event happy end to difficult year

Independent MP Helena Guergis has given birth to a boy.

Guergis and husband Rahim Jaffer, a former Conservative MP, welcomed their son Zavier Rahim Nizarali Guergis Jaffer yesterday.

Zavier weighed seven pounds, seven ounces.

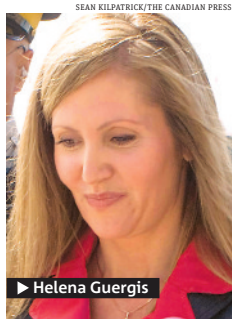
The birth was a happy end to a difficult year for the couple.

Guergis was turfed from the Conservative caucus and her job as junior minister after it was revealed Jaffer was an associate of a Toronto businessman facing fraud charges.

The charges were later dropped, but Jaffer and Guergis are still the subject of investigations by the lobbying and ethics commissioners relating to Jaffer's contact with government officials.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS



▶ Helena Guergis

Doctors call for deal by Christmas

A negotiated end to sometimes nasty contract talks could be reached between doctors and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador by the end of the week, says the provincial finance minister.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Robber pulls off Vegas heist

Hotel workers reach deal

Nearly six months after their last contract expired, workers at four major hotels in downtown Vancouver have reached a tentative agreement. The proposed deal covers 1,600 employees.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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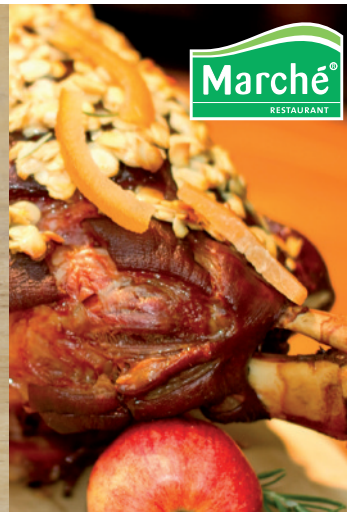

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LT PLATINUM EDITION SHOWN††

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Example: $10,000 at 0%/2.9% APR, monthly payment is $208.33/$220.90 for 48 months. Cost of borrowing is $0/$603.20, total obligation is $10,000/$10,603.20. Down payment and/or trade may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will also vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment made. Variable rate financing for 24 months on 2011 Malibu LS 1KT07/Equinox LS FWD (1TA, 2NA) only. Example: $10,000 at 3% for 84 months, the monthly payment is $122.13, cost of borrowing is $1,258.92, total obligation is $11,258.92. Down payment and/or trade may be required. Monthly payments and cost of borrowing will also vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment made. Offers may be combined with other offers. GMCL may modify, extend or terminate offers in whole or in part at any time without notice. Conditions and details: ***Factory order or dealer trade may be required. Limited time offers which may not be combined with other offers. 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Excludes hybrid models. 2011 Chevrolet Equinox FWD equipped with standard 2.4L EDOTEC-I 4 engine. Fuel consumption ratings based on GM testing in accordance with approved Transport Canada test methods. Competitive fuel ratings based on Natural Resources Canada's 2010 Fuel Consumption Guide. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. ©The Best Buy Stall is a registered trademark of Consumers Digest Communications, LLC, used under license. ©Chevrolet Malibu and Equinox are an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) Top Safety Pick for 2010. For more information go to www.iihs.org. †12011 Chevrolet Malibu LT Platinum Edition, MSRP with Freight, PDI & fees $29,488. 2011 Chevrolet Equinox LT 2JNSP with Freight, PDI & fees $33,244. Dealers are free to set individual prices. ‡Subject to Vehicle Redemption Allowances. Visit thegmcard.ca for more details including terms and conditions that apply to The GM Card Earnings and Redemption Program. 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Sears

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ASSOCIATED PRESS TELEVISION NEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Costis Hatzidakis, second from right, former Greek minister for development in the last government, is attacked yesterday during protests in Athens in this image taken from Associated Press Television News footage. The person holding Hatzidakis is a bodyguard.

General strike hits Greece anew

New reforms including fresh pay cuts, salary caps and involuntary staff transfers face fierce opposition

Protesters clashed with riot police across Athens yesterday, torching cars, hurling gasoline bombs and sending Christmas shoppers fleeing in panic during a general strike against the government's latest austerity measures.

Police fired tear gas and flash grenades as the violence escalated outside parliament and spread to other parts of the capital.

Angry unions triggered the 24-hour strike to protest new labour reforms and pay cuts as Greece struggles to reshape its economy under conditions set by a $146-billion US international bailout. The strike also grounded flights, closed factories, disrupted hospitals and shut down trains, ferries and buses across the country.

$146B
Greece was saved from bankruptcy in May by a $146-billion US international rescue loan package.

It was the seventh strike this year by unions appalled at a wave of austerity policies meant to pull Greece out of its worst financial crisis since the Second World War.

In Athens, youths wearing black masks and ski goggles used sledgehammers to smash paving stones and hurled the rubble at police. At least 10 people were detained yesterday and five were hurt, including a conservative politician who was beaten in the street by protesters.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW BUSINESS HOURS

effective November 29, 2010

TRANSACTIONAL SERVICE		ADVISORY SERVICE	
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Tuesday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Tuesday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Wednesday	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Thursday	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Thursday	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday	8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Friday	8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
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1461 Dundas St. W
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272 Danforth Ave.
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500 Rexdale Blvd.
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1500 Upper Middle Rd., Unit 2
1461 Rebecca St.
511 Maple Grove Dr.
240 Leighland Ave.
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285 Taunton Rd.
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730 Danforth Ave.
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2120 Queen St. E
8 Wellesley St. E
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120 Front St. E
660 Eglinton Ave. E, Unit 104
1530 Albion Rd.
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Two die in parking lot shootout

A mother loading her two-year-old son into a vehicle used her body to protect the toddler before she was shot and killed in an ensuing midday gun battle at a Sacramento shopping centre, sheriff's officials said yesterday.

Barbershop

- Detectives believe at least one gunman entered the Fly Cuts & Styles barbershop just before 1 p.m. and began shooting.
- At least one person inside the shop returned fire.

Monique Nelson, 30, had just strapped her son into his car seat when she was struck in the chest, and detectives believe she positioned herself to protect her son, Sacramento County Sheriff's Sgt. Tim Curran said.

A second victim, 20-year-old Marvion Barksdale, also died from injuries suffered in the shootout after being taken to a hospital where he underwent surgery for a chest wound, Curran said. Five other men were injured in the gunfight. All are expected to survive.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Senate passes tax compromise

Contentious $858B tax bill passes in upper house by vote of 81-19

U.S. President Barack Obama's compromise tax deal with Republicans — a package of cuts that would add nearly one trillion dollars to the U.S. debt — won approval in the Senate yesterday.

Obama swiftly urged the House of Representatives, where Obama's fellow Democrats see the bill as overgenerous to the wealthy, to pass the $858-billion measure without changes, a slap at Democratic liberals eager to toughen part of the bill that permits up to $10 million to pass tax free to heirs on an estate.

If passed, the bill would spare Americans at every income level from larger tax bills beginning Jan. 1.

With opposition Republicans poised to take control of the House after last month's landslide election victory, Obama had little choice but to drop his objections to an extension of lower assessments on wealthy Americans. Republicans had vowed to let cuts for lower- and middle-income to expire as well.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Congress

The bipartisan deal marks a test of how Obama will govern without his Democratic party in control of the House and with a reduced majority in the Senate.

- His readiness to reach accommodation with the opposition Republicans likely will set a pattern for the final half of his term.

Pope. Entertainment

▶ Acrobats perform in front of Pope Benedict XVI, during his weekly general audience yesterday at the Vatican.

PIER PAOLO CITO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Feats of strength

Four acrobats took their circus act to the Vatican, performing shirtless for Pope Benedict XVI during his weekly general audience. The Pellegrini Brothers took off their shirts as they came on stage yesterday to begin their show, which lasted a few minutes. They lifted each other in acrobatic poses, keeping balance with their bodies supported only by their arms, at one point creating a human tower.

Keeping you in the know and on the GO

Starting Saturday, January 1, 2011*, we're increasing GO Bus service and making some changes too.

25 – WATERLOO GO BUS

We're adding several new weekday and weekend trips. The Friday 2:25 p.m., 4:20, 5:20 and 6:25 trips from the University of Waterloo will now depart **10 minutes earlier.**

31 – GEORGETOWN GO BUS

A new weekday eastbound trip will depart the Bramalea GO Station at 12:20 p.m., serve Malton GO Station at 12:30, and arrive at the Union Station GO Bus Terminal at 1:00. Two new weekday westbound trips will depart Union at 1:00 p.m. and 9:15, and run express to the Malton and Bramalea GO Stations.

Three new weekday westbound trips will depart Union at 11:20 a.m., 12:20 p.m. and 1:20, run express to Brampton, then serve all stops to the Brampton Bus Terminal.

The weekday westbound 12:50 p.m. trip from Union to the Brampton Bus Terminal will be extended to the Georgetown GO Station.

There will also be earlier departures on many trips so be sure to check the new schedule.

32 – BRAMPTON TRINITY COMMON GO BUS

There will be **earlier departures** on most eastbound trips, **earlier departures** on some westbound trips, and some times have been adjusted to better reflect typical travel times.

37 – ORANGEVILLE GO BUS

There will be **earlier departures** on most southbound trips and some adjustments to northbound trips to better reflect typical travel time.

38 – BOLTON-HWY. 27 GO BUS & BOLTON-HWY. 50 GO BUS

There will be **earlier departures** on most trips and some times have been adjusted to better reflect typical travel times.

46 – HWY. 407 WEST GO BUS

A new weekday westbound trip will depart Square One at 7:32 a.m. and run express to McMaster. Two new weekday eastbound trips will depart McMaster at 7:10 p.m. and 8:10, then serve Square One and the Bramalea GO Station.

52 – HWY. 407 EAST GO BUS

Times between Scarborough Town Centre and the Pickering GO Station have been adjusted to better reflect typical travel times.

The weekday westbound 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 trips from Mount Joy GO Station will be discontinued due to low ridership. Customers may take the 6:55, 8:00 or 9:00 trips instead.

61 – RICHMOND HILL GO BUS

There are minor adjustments on some trips to better reflect typical travel times.

65 – BARRIE-BRADFORD GO BUS

A new weekday southbound trip will depart Aurora GO Station at 5:20 a.m., serve the Aurora Carpool Lot at 5:28 and arrive at the Union Station GO Bus Terminal at 6:00. Two new weekday northbound trips will depart Union at 6:55 p.m. and 7:55 and run express to Aurora.

A new weekday southbound trip will depart East Gwillimbury GO Station at 10:30 a.m., serve the Newmarket GO Bus Terminal at 10:42, Aurora GO Station at 10:55, the Aurora Carpool Lot at 11:02, and arrive at Union at 11:40.

Three new weekday northbound trips will depart Union at 9:30 p.m., 10:30 and 11:30 and run express to Newmarket.

NEW BRADFORD BUS LOOP

Buses will now use the new bus loop at the Bradford GO Station instead of the stops at Bridge & Dissette.

With this change, southbound trips will depart Barrie Bus Terminal **five minutes earlier.**

Departures will also be earlier in Stroud, Churchill, Bradford (Barrie @ John), the Bradford GO Station and Holland Landing. Arrival times at the Newmarket GO Bus Terminal remain the same.

71 – STOUFFVILLE GO BUS

A new weekday northbound trip will depart Union Station at 1:50 p.m., run express to Markham GO Station, then serve all stops and arrive in Uxbridge at 3:05. The weekday northbound 1:40 p.m. trip from Union will now end at the Centennial GO Station.

A new weekday northbound trip will depart Union at 2:20 p.m., run express to Markham, then serve all stops and arrive at Lincolnville at 3:20. The weekday northbound 2:10 p.m. trip from Union will now end at Centennial.

81 – PORT PERRY GO BUS

There will be some earlier departures from Port Perry and at other stops along the route.

88 – PETERBOROUGH GO BUS

There will be earlier departures from Trent University on some trips.

*Please note that on Saturday, January 1, 2011, our service will operate on a holiday schedule.

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▶ A polar bear is shown in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Global warming can be slowed enough to prevent a total loss of critical summer sea ice for polar bears, according to a new study released yesterday.

Polar bears not doomed: Study

‘The problem is not irreversible’: Research author

Two groups of scientists are suggesting a sliver of hope for the future of polar bears in a warming world.

A study published online yesterday rejects the often used concept of a “tipping point,” or point of no return, when it comes to sea ice and the big bear that has become the symbol of climate change woes. The study optimistically suggests that if the world dramatically changed its steadily increasing emissions of greenhouse gases, a total loss of critical summer sea ice for the bears could be averted.

Another research group projects that even if global warming doesn’t slow — a more likely near-future scenario — a thin, icy refuge for the bears would still remain between Greenland and Canada.

A grim future for polar bears is one of the most tangible and poignant outcomes of global warming. Four years ago, federal researchers reported that two-thirds of the world’s polar bear habitat could vanish by mid-century.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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JOHN ULAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Former Alberta premier Ralph Klein, left, receives The Alberta Order of Excellence from Lt.-Gov. Donald Ethell earlier this year.

Emphysema stricken?

- Former Alberta premier Ralph Klein dealing with illnes: Confidante
- Klein said getting rid of Alberta's debt was one of his top achievements

A close friend and one-time adviser to Ralph Klein says the former Alberta premier has emphysema. Rod Love said the illness has, in his words, "slowed (Klein) down, but he's still out and about."

He said Klein, 68, is still enjoying retirement in Calgary with his wife, Colleen, and their grandchildren.

Klein was not immediately available for comment. He left office in late 2006 after leading the Progressive Conservatives to three majority election wins. During his tenure, the province used soaring oil and gas revenues to wipe out its $23-billion debt. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Holiday Schedule

December 24
Earlier afternoon rush hour

December 25 & 26
Holiday service

December 27 & 28
Saturday service

December 29 & 30
Regular service

December 31
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UN lifts Iraq's weapon sanctions

Historic deal

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said lifting the sanctions is "the biggest political accomplishment for Iraq."

▶ **Limitations** But there still were limits on some activities related to the possible production of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The UN Security Council lifted sanctions yesterday that barred Iraq from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and pursuing a civilian nuclear program, in a symbolic step to restore the country to the international standing it held before Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq's constitution bars the country from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the country is a party to the main nuclear, chemical, biological and missile treaties. The resolution, adopted unanimously, also lifted sanctions that barred Iraq from acquiring nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and long-range missiles.

The council also voted to terminate all remaining activities of the oil-for-food program, which ran from 1996-2003 and helped ordinary Iraqis cope with sanctions. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toy. Trains

▶ Rusty Litten and his grandson, Isaac Litten, 3, watch an exhibit of toy trains yesterday in Arkansas.

DANNY JOHNSTON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

In the middle of the action

The trains were presented by the Lionel Collectors Club of America at the Laman Public Library in North Little Rock, Ark.

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DEAD HEAT

Tories, Liberals in a tie: Poll

It appears the Conservatives and Liberals are ending the year the same way they started it — in a dead heat.

A new poll by The Canadian Press Harris-Decima suggests the Tories have the support of 31 per cent of Canadians, statistically tied with the Liberals at 29 per cent.

That's far from the support levels needed to win a majority.

The tepid results are markedly different than a couple of other polls published recently, which suggested the Tories had pulled into a healthy lead, verging on majority territory.

And they're likely to dampen speculation that Prime Minister Stephen Harper will pull the plug on his minority government early in the new year.

The poll suggests no party should be eager for an election any time soon.

The telephone survey of 2,022 Canadians was conducted Dec. 2 to 13 and is considered accurate within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points, 19 times in 20. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada, Europe trade deal likely: Official

ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Karel De Gucht, European Commissioner for Trade, listens to Peter Van Loan, the Canadian Minister of International Trade, yesterday in Ottawa.

Trade with U.S. remains on solid footing according to trade minister

Trade Minister Peter Van Loan says it is becoming increasingly likely that Canada will reach a comprehensive trade agreement with the European Union.

The trade minister says he had expected difficult negotiations but they have progressed better than expected.

Van Loan and his European counterpart, Karel De Gucht, have agreed to proceed with the talks after receiving assessments from their chief negotiators.

Both say the difficult issues, particularly access to provincial government procurement and agricultural subsidies, have yet to be settled, but that talks are ahead of schedule. The two sides have set an end of 2011 date for concluding a deal. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Working like a dog? Time to call in Fido

- U.S. university gives stressed-out students a canine pick-me-up
- Playful therapy dogs take the pain out of studying and final exams

Calm down

- Therapy dogs have long been used to cheer up the sick and elderly. But more and more colleges are embracing the idea as a stress reliever.
- Other stress-busters include late-night yoga and oxygen bars. Some students also dress up and deliver free food.

A U.S. university is throwing stressed-out students a bone: Therapy dogs to play with during final exams.

Tufts University in Massachusetts, like other colleges, is helping students navigate those last days before turning in final papers and taking finals.

"I hope these puppies make me happy and give me a nice break between studying," 19-year-old Tufts freshman Chloe Wong said, petting an Australian shepherd.

She feared she would lose her cool with her first set of final exams.

But Tuesday, she got to relax and play with a set of dogs resident director Michael Bliss brought in for her and other Tufts students he serves.

They set down their books and laptops to pet and feed the animals.

"Every college student has stress around finals," said Bliss, who got the idea of dog visits after participating in a similar program as an undergraduate at New York University.

"And taking a break out from that with something as easy and simple and loving as petting dogs is really helpful."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GRETCHEN ERTL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Sully, a five-year-old Australian shepherd, visits students at Tufts University earlier this week.

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U.S. Senate delays arms treaty

The White House accused Senate Republicans of reaching a "new low" in political gamesmanship and undercutting national security in threatening to delay efforts to ratify the U.S.-Russia nuclear arms treaty, President Barack Obama's top foreign policy priority.

In a scathing statement, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs yesterday assailed Republicans who have vowed to stall the long-awaited debate on the treaty by forcing the pact to be read aloud in the Senate.

The treaty, signed in April, would lower the cap on nuclear warheads for both countries and establish a system for monitoring. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANDEL NGAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Gibbs

1,000 held in Moscow to prevent riots

New ethnic clashes erupt after weekend rioting by racist hooligans

At least 1,000 people were detained in Moscow yesterday in an attempt to prevent ethnic clashes, police said, after weekend rioting by racist hooligans fuelled rumours that minorities were planning to retaliate.

Resentment has been rising among Slavic Russians over the growing presence in Moscow of people from the southern Caucasus region, the home of numerous ethnic groups, most of them Muslim.

People from other parts of the former Soviet Union, including Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, also face ethnic discrimination and are frequent victims of hate crimes.

New scuffles erupted yesterday outside the Kievsky train station, which is popular with street merchants from the Caucasus. Hundreds of riot police were deployed and they detained young men shouting racist slogans. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rising tension

The weekend rally began as a protest against the killing of a member of the Spartak Moscow soccer team's fan club.

- **Spartak fans** claimed corrupt policemen detained one suspected killer following the fight.
- **Russian media** have been abuzz with rumours that some people from the Caucasus could try to take revenge for Saturday's riots.

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Space. Mission

▶ U.S. astronaut Catherine Coleman, centre, Russian cosmonaut Dmitry Kondratiev, bottom, and Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli, crew members of the mission to the International Space Station.

DMITRY LOVETSKY/AP PHOTO

Astronauts blast off on mission to International Space Station

Astronauts from the U.S., Russia and Italy blasted off into the darkness today, lighting up the chilly plains of Kazakhstan with their Soyuz spacecraft as they began a mission to the International Space Station. The astronauts rode into space on the Soyuz TMA-20, which plans to dock at the orbiting laboratory on Friday.

EU gives award to dissident

Empty chair set out for Cuban at human rights prize ceremony

A Cuban dissident used a video address at yesterday's award of the EU's main human rights prize to call for the release of political prisoners in his homeland and for the government to end attacks on the opposition.

Guillermo Farinas, a 48-year-old psychologist and freelance journalist, was not allowed by Cuba to travel to receive the Sakharov human rights prize in Strasbourg, France.

"It is important to note that the Cuban government is very weak. And because it is weak, it is more dangerous."
GUILLERMO FARINAS, PSYCHOLOGIST AND FREELANCE JOURNALIST

He said the travel ban was "irrefutable testimony to the fact that, unfortunately, nothing has changed (in Cuba)."

Farinas won the prize in October after his 134-day hunger strike helped draw attention to the plight of activists, opposition leaders and social critics in Cuban jails.

Previous winners of the prize include Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela. It was awarded twice before to Cubans: In 2002 to pro-democracy activist Oswaldo Paya; and in 2005 to a dissident group, Ladies in White.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKLIN REYES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Guillermo Farinas

Zuckerberg. Timely honour

▶ The cover for Time magazine's 2010 Person of the Year issue features Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

TIME MAGAZINE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zuckerberg tops Queen

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg has been named Time magazine's Person of the Year for 2010. At 26, he is the youngest person of the year since the first one chosen, Charles Lindbergh; he was 25 when he was named in 1927, Time said yesterday. Zuckerberg beat out the Queen by just two weeks: She was 26 when she was named in 1952. Many had expected Time to choose newsmaking WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Germany gives $80M to preserve Auschwitz

1M **The barracks, gas chambers and other buildings are in need of urgent repair, having been worn down by the ravages of time and the pressure of more than 1 million visitors per year.**

Germany pledged yesterday to pay €60 million ($80 million) over the next year into a fund for Auschwitz-Birkenau to preserve the barracks, gas chambers and other evidence of Nazi crimes at the former death camp, some of which are deteriorating to the point of collapse.

Germany is the largest of several countries contributing to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Fund, which was set up in 2009 to gather money to maintain the 472-acre expanse made up of the original camp, Auschwitz, and the nearby satellite camp of Birkenau.

The camp was operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during the Second World War. More than one million people, mostly Jews, died in the camp's gas chambers or through forced labour, disease or starvation.

Museum director Piotr Cywinski first issued a worldwide appeal for help in 2008, saying €120 million was needed to repair the memorial site.

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By the numbers

3.2

Improving financial market conditions and lingering low interest rates will boost Canadian economic growth to 3.2 per cent next year, slightly more robust than 2010's projected growth of 3.1 per cent, according to the latest economic outlook from RBC Economics. Growth slowed in the third quarter of this year, largely due to softness in the housing market and U.S. economy, the report said.

4.8

New data show Canadian home sales grew in November for the fourth straight month but continued a trend of unfavourable comparisons to the same month last year, when sales reached record levels. The Canadian Real Estate Association said home resales were up 4.8 per cent last month compared to October. Home resales have also rebounded by 19.5 per cent from July, when the market hit a trough following the introduction of new mortgage rules, higher interest rates and a new tax in two provinces.

154.4

Dundee Real Estate Investment Trust is set to buy real estate investor and developer Realex Properties Corp. for $154.4 million in cash. Calgary-based Realex's value is pegged at $385 million. It owns stakes in 24 office and industrial spaces in Canada.

1.7

Manufacturing sales increased 1.7 per cent in October to $45.5 billion, largely due to gains in the petroleum and coal products, primary metals and motor vehicle industries. Statistics Canada says manufacturing sales have slowed their growth in recent months after increasing substantially between May 2009 and May 2010.

Watchdog, credit card firms face off over fees

Visa, MasterCard say retailers can offer discounts for cash or debit

RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Visa and MasterCard process about 90 per cent of all credit card transactions in the country.

Canadian shoppers are paying all around higher prices because major credit card companies forbid retailers from charging credit card users a fee at the checkout, Canada's competition watchdog claims.

In an application filed yesterday with the Competition Tribunal, the Competition Bureau alleges that a "no-surcharge" rule and other policies of both Visa and MasterCard are "restrictive and anti-competitive."

The filing has reignited a war of words between the bureau on one side and the credit card companies on the other, who say the rules actually protect consumers from retailers who could slap fees on transactions and discriminate against card users.

Store owners are currently charged between 1.5 per cent and three per cent per credit card transaction, but the "no-surcharge" rule prevents them from tacking on a surcharge to offset the extra amount. The bureau claims those fees add up to about $5 billion per year in hidden credit card fees for Canadian merchants — who pay some of the highest levels in the world.

Competition commissioner Melanie Aitken maintains that encourages businesses to bury the surcharges in the prices of all their products — no matter what payment method is used.

The bureau also takes issue with credit card policies that prevent retailers from encouraging consumers to use other payment options, like cash or debit, which cost retailers less, and a requirement that merchants must accept all credit cards offered by a company, including premium cards that carry higher fees for acceptance.

However, the credit card companies and a consumer association argued that removing the rules would allow merchants to charge credit card users exorbitant fees that can vary wildly while at the same time keeping current prices intact.

MasterCard said if businesses were forced to charge a fee for use, it would result in a form of discrimination against credit card holders, who would have to pay more for using the cards.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Investors turn cautious over Europe crisis

New York markets lose early momentum Loonie rises even as U.S. dollar gains against other currencies

The Toronto stock market closed lower for a second session yesterday with investors selling stocks across most sectors amid the latest round of worries about Europe's debt crisis.

Government debt worries were back in focus after Spain was warned it may have its credit rating downgraded.

Moody's Investor Services put Spain's Aa1 rating on review for possible downgrade because of its high refinancing needs in 2011, a potential rise in its debt burden and increased concerns over the ability of the government to get its public finances into shape.

Rival agency Standard & Poor's delivered a similar warning to Belgium on Tuesday, which also made investors nervous that the debt crisis might spread following the earlier bailouts of Greece and Ireland.

Oil prices turned around following the release of data from the U.S. Energy Department showing that oil inventories fell more than expected last week.

Defensive sectors fared best on the TSX with the utilities sector ahead 0.76 per cent as Canadian Utilities Ltd. rose $1.01 to $53.49. The consumer staples sector ran ahead 0.59 per cent with Shoppers Drug Mart ahead 88 cents at $38.68.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 4 P.M. YESTERDAY

TSX	Dollar
– 51.01 (13,229.07)	+ 0.25¢ (99.60¢ US)
Oil	**Natural gas 1,000 cu ft**
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KAREN BLEIER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Santa Clara County, Calif., passed an ordinance similar to San Francisco's ban.

Sued for selling toys

San Francisco becomes first city prohibiting fast-food restaurants from including toys with children's meals that do not meet nutritional guidelines

A California mother and the Center for Science in the Public Interest have sued McDonald's Corp., trying to get the fast-food chain to stop using toys to market meals to young children. The lawsuit was filed in California Superior Court in San Francisco yesterday.

They claim McDonald's decision to market its meals directly to young children violates several consumer protection laws because it exploits a child's vulnerability.

San Francisco recently became the first city to prohibit fast-food restaurants from including toys with children's meals that don't met nutritional guidelines.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro
News worth sharing.

Dannon Co. accountable for false advertising

$35M Dannon settled a class-action lawsuit earlier this year over similar claims. Less than $1 million of a $35-million fund established in the case was paid out.

Dannon Co. Inc. has agreed to pay $21 million US and drop some health claims for its Activia yogurt and DanActive dairy drink in settlements with U.S. state and federal regulators.

The food company has claimed that beneficial bacteria in its Activia yogurt helps relieve irregularity and that its DanActive drink helps people avoid catching colds or the flu.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission said yesterday there is not enough evidence to back those claims. It announced it has reached a settlement with the company that prohibits it from making such claims unless they are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The attorneys general from 39 states also announced yesterday that they have reached a $21-million settlement with the food maker over the marketing claims. This case, led by attorney generals in Oregon and Tennessee, represents the largest attorney general consumer protection multi-state settlement ever reached with a food producer.

The two lead states will receive $1.06 million under the agreement and the remainder of the money will be divided among the other states.

"Consumers want, and are entitled to accurate information when it comes to their health," FTC chairman Jon Leibowitz said in a statement.

"Companies like Dannon shouldn't exaggerate the strength of scientific support for their products."

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Dagenham 1968

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GIMME SHELTER – THE CANADIAN VERSION

He says ...

JOHN MAZEROLLE

Thanks to man's hubris and God's Great Plan, this country is being walloped by extreme weather, raising the spectre of car accidents, property damage, and a slew of Canadian disaster movies with names like Snow! and The Day Saskatchewan Stood Still.

The recent bad weather — affecting everyone from coast to coast except Margaret Wente and Rex Murphy — reminds us that Canada will be hit by more calamities as the Earth's weather patterns change.

Deluges. Dumpings. Death from the skies. It won't be long before Environment Canada's special weather statements just say, "Pray."

Meteorologists concerned about climate change spend months analyzing information from dozens of satellites, hundreds of monitoring stations, and thousands of hands sticking out windows. Then they give up, call a press conference, and blame everything on El Nino.

That might sound imprecise, but it's a big improvement on the early 1900s, when weather prognosticators relied largely on the reactions of barnyard animals. For instance, a meteorologist would take a live chicken, throw it into the air, and make his wind readings based on the chicken's speed, direction, impact crater, and giblet radius.

We at Metro care deeply about you, the reader, because you, the reader, could one day become you, the advertiser, which is why I've prepared a special chart that explains the different levels of storm and how quickly they will kill you. You're welcome.

Category 1: Trees sway; reporters' raincoats flutter; kids go sliding. (Media designation: Snowmageddon)

Category 2: Telephone wires whistle; reporters standing in the snow yell, "There's a lot of snow!"; televisions tragically lose reception late in the third period. (Media designation: Apocalypse (S)now)

Category 3: Telephone poles whistle; storm jokes appear in late-night monologues; reporters comically flap in the breeze à la Kermit the Frog in a Big Bad Wolf sketch. (Media designation: Possible El Nino Link Storm)

Category 4: Television news executives whistle; people pray to Jesus; storm cleanses gene pool of particularly stupid surfers. (Media designation: Possible al-Qaida Link Storm)

Category 5: People pray to all available gods; crazy people yell, "You call this a storm?" then blow away; script rights for movie sold to Michael Bay. (Media designation: Award Nomination Storm).

Fortunately, winter eventually comes to an end. Then all you'll have to worry about is droughts, skin cancer, and hurricanes. Metro reminds you to have a live chicken ready, just in case.

Read more of John Mazerolle's columns at metronews.ca/hesays

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDER

$h*! that Santa says

Worth mentioning

Santa has succumbed to Twittermania. Actually, multiple Santas of varying integrity have succumbed to Twittermania. Some are honest-to-goodness jolly old elves who want to bring joy into the hearts of children around the world. Others would like to sell you things. A few are downright rude.

Here are a few of your options:

You would not let your child watch @loadedsanta if he was on TV. He has a foul mouth and, apparently, a venereal disease.

Loaded Santa has one competitor in the "Most Vulgar" category. That would be @RealSantaClaus, full name Santa Hussein Claus.

NORAD Santa has clout.

In fact, @noradsanta is so well-connected that he appears to have hired someone to tweet for him — probably a young, nerdy elf. He's a little dry — maybe he's following military protocol? — but otherwise @noradsanta is as good as it gets.

@NorthPolePost, who, like the others, touts himself as "the real" Santa. He tweets about how cute Mrs. Claus is and how much he loves lamb stew. He responds to tweeted letters from his fans without swearing. If St. Nick is really on Twitter, this could be him.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Jolly old tweeter

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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Metro Minute with the Grinch

We love the holiday season. We truly do. All the lights and candy canes and snow and good cheer make us feel magical. But that love does not extend to the Christmas music some radio stations believe we need to start listening to on a 24-hour loop. In November. Nor does it include the death-match, cage-fighting style of competitive shopping that goes down at every commercial centre in North America.

So, in honour of the inner Grinch inside us all, we recommend catching Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas musical for a bit of theatrical catharsis. The show starts tomorrow at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts. ● JORDANA DIVON

CONTRIBUTED

▶ Tickets for How The Grinch Stole Christmas at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts are available at sonycentre.ca.

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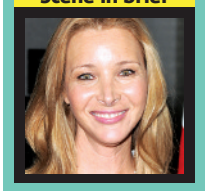

Lisa Kudrow's TV series Who Do You Think You Are? has lined up Tim McGraw, Lionel Richie and other stars who want to trace their family roots.

NBC said Tuesday that the new season of the show will also include Ashley Judd, Steve Buscemi, Vanessa Williams, Rosie O'Donnell and Kim Cattrall.

Kudrow, the former Friends star, is an executive producer for the show. She said celebrities who take part are eager to find answers about their family history.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Roger Ebert's new movie review TV show to premiere in January, cleared for 192 US markets. Learn how to scan on page 3.

▶ Jack Nicholson reunited with writer-director James L. Brooks for the upcoming comedy How Do You Know.

All play and no work makes Jack happy

NED EHRBAR
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METRO WORLD NEWS IN LOS ANGELES

"I'm kind of a guy who likes to prove things. Everybody always said, 'You couldn't not work.' Well, I'm kind of proving them wrong."
JACK NICHOLSON

It's been three years since Jack Nicholson's last movie — The Bucket List with Morgan Freeman — but the Hollywood icon wouldn't exactly say he's been missing a lot of work.

"I love it, not working," Nicholson says. "I'm kind of a guy who likes to prove things. Everybody always said, 'You couldn't not work.' Well, I'm kind of proving them wrong."

His latest, How Do You Know, finds him playing Paul Rudd's intimidating father, watching his son navigate a love triangle with Owen Wilson and Reese Witherspoon.

The movie re-teams Nicholson and writer-director James L. Brooks, who has twice directed to an Academy Award.

"He's kind of close to me. It's a privilege to work with Jim," Nicholson says. "A couple Oscars didn't hurt cementing the relationship. That's how you know you're in love."

Just because they're old friends doesn't mean Brooks goes easy on the 73-year-old actor. In fact, Nicholson says, his old pal can be a bit tough sometimes.

"This crying scene I had with Paul [Rudd], I'm doing it like this and all of a sudden [James] comes running out from the back and he says, 'I don't think we want the grips laughing around the television set in the middle of a scene like this.'" Nicholson remembers.

"And I thought, 'This is a comedy. I never had direction like this.' Don't make anybody laugh! I thought, Jesus Christ. Then he forgot it! I told him this the other night and he forgot he did it. Somehow it's inspiring."

With nothing new on his agenda, Nicholson is looking forward to returning to his life of leisure.

"I like not working. I know that's kind of hideous and blasphemous, but I really do," he says. "And I think I've started to infect others of my young guys. I had a conversation with Leo [DiCaprio] and he said, 'Geez, I love not working.' I said, 'See what I mean?' I don't want to infect him."

So what keeps Nicholson busy if it's not acting? "I just like getting up some time between 11 and 1 p.m., which is not movie hours — unless you're doing night movies," he starts before listing off his current hobbies. "Play golf. I got a couple of kids in college, so I'm on the phone a lot. See my pals, chase women around. Not too much. Talk to my congressman, go to funerals."

And what about going to the Staples Center, where Nicholson can regularly be seen sitting courtside, supporting the Los Angeles Lakers?

"That's more of a job," he says with a gruff laugh. "I have to be there."

Album reviews A classic ●●●●● | Buy it ●●●● |
Get the single ●●● | Borrow it ●● | Don't bother ●

Michael Jackson
Album: Michael
Label: Sony
●●
The challenge here is to put aside all the pre-release chatter about this album being a cash grab. Will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas has even denounced it as "disrespectful" to the gloved one's memory. All of that maybe true. Nonetheless, there's some decent music here. These 10 tracks, after all, have been pieced together from unfinished remnants. There are times when you're left cringing and asking aloud 'is that really Michael singing?' Considering that, the estate's production team has done some Herculean work. Indeed, it's amazing that this disc contains only two or three true dogs. There's the ridiculously self-serving Breaking News, and even 50 Cent's spurious snarl couldn't save the laughably horrid Monster. The lead single Hold My Hand is more Akon than MJ but it's already doing well on the charts. Michael has its moments. The gospel-tinged Keep Your Head Up is truly uplifting and the album's top track, (I Like) The Way You Love Me, is a surprisingly delight.
GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM

Crystal Bowersox
Album: Farmer's Daughter
Label: Sony
●●½
Crystal Bowersox's ability to belt out blues rock a la Melissa Etheridge or Janis Joplin made her a favourite to win last year's American Idol. Her vintage-style vocals only got her to second place, though. So on her debut disc, Bowersox wisely tailors her talents toward a country rock audience, ala Miranda Lambert. The result is impressive, but fails to deliver a star-making knockout punch. GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM

R. Kelly
Album: Love Letter
Label: Jive
●●●½
"I want to bring the love songs back to the radio" sings Robert Kelly on his tenth album. With Love Letter, his effort to do so is a valiant one, as Kells tones down the crazy quite a few notches to return to the slow jams and ballads that built his career. Those hoping he'd return to the silk-sheeted R&B should find solace in Love Letter.
CAM LINDSAY

Ryan Adams and The Cardinals
Album: Cardinals III/IV
Label: Pax Am
●●●●
Recorded in 2006, Adams' fifth album with the Cardinals saw them break from Easy Tiger's twang to explore some spirited rock 'n' roll. Like 2005's Cold Roses, there's too much to absorb at once, but thankfully the concept is loose and the band is fully amplified, leaving Adams to fully indulge in a tribute to The Replacements. CAM LINDSAY

Flo Rida not too worried about album sales

Rapper has seen much success with his singles, which have generated millions in sales

Flo Rida has sold millions when it comes to hit singles, but his albums have yet to get that kind of love from music fans.

His first two albums haven't reached gold status, and his latest, Only One Flo (Part 1), debuted at No. 107 on the charts earlier this month.

But Flo Rida said he's not concerned with how many albums he sells.

"You're trying to sell records, sell singles — do it all. But I'm not too fond of even just worrying about that," he said. "The most important thing is just, you know, connecting with the fans on a worldwide basis because a lot of times you'll see numbers and that doesn't play a part in the whole worldwide numbers."

The rapper's first two CDs, 2008's Mail On Sunday and last year's R.O.O.T.S., have sold 430,000 and 266,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

But Flo Rida's singles have topped the charts and sold millions digitally. His debut song, the party jam Low, has sold 5.7 million units, while the uptempo Right Round has moved 4.7 million singles in sales; both songs hit the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

JEFF CHRISTENSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Flo Rida

The 30-year-old said selling millions of singles is just as good as selling millions of albums.

"When you look at the numbers it definitely ... adds up to that," he said. "So I'm doing pretty good."

Club Can't Handle Me, the first single from Flo Rida's latest album, is quickly approaching double platinum status. It features French disc jockey-producer David Guetta; other guests on the album include Ludacris, Gucci Mane and Akon.

The eight-track album will have a sequel set for release "in the next couple months," Flo Rida said.
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TV watch list

Tune in to this creepy Christmas classic

MOVIES. Amid all the cheery, wistful Christmas specials infiltrating the airwaves is a less saccharine holiday classic: Gremlins, the 1984's hilarious horror flick.

What better pre-Christmas stress release than watching the titular green devils terrorize a peaceful town?

▶ **Gremlins**
Comedy/horror
CHCH, 8 p.m. EST

The dark side of college ball

SPORTS. ESPN's excellent "30 for 30" series continues with Pony Excess, a documentary look at a college football team that came apart at the seams in the 1980s.

The Mustangs of Southern Methodist University commonly violated regulations — with help from local Dallas oil barons and real estate tycoons — until the school's football program was suspended entirely by the NCAA in 1987. Director Thaddeus D. Matula graduated from SMU's film school.

▶ **Pony Excess**
Documentary
ESPN, 7 p.m. EST

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GETTY IMAGES

▶ Eric Stonestreet, left, and Jesse Tyler Ferguson

Inside a Modern Family

Metro sits down with TV couple

One of the best sitcoms to hit television in recent years is the Emmy award winning show Modern Family. The hilarious storylines revolve around a married gay couple who've adopted a Vietnamese daughter; an older man and his much younger vivacious Colombian wife; and a homemaker married to a big kid of a husband raising their three children.

Actors Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Eric Stonestreet play married couple Mitchell and Cameron, and Stonestreet won an Emmy this year for his comedic role. Metro sat down with the on-screen couple on the show's set.

What is your definition of a "modern family?"

JTF: To me it means something that is all encompassing; all ethnicities, all sexualities and no ageism. I would hope that would be the universal term. I had never really given it much thought until I heard Ricky Martin refer to his family as a 'modern family,' which I thought was kind of interesting.

Has a storyline ever been stolen from your own lives and ended up on the show?

JTF: Oh yeah, lots. I had to come out to my father three times, so that was in the script. And ironically, my dad used to make T-shirts for us kids and Jay makes these T-shirts that read: Clear and Present Danger. But just so we're clear, my father has got that I'm a gay man now!

Can you talk about how we've learned to know about your characters since we meet Cam's mother (played by Celia Weston)?

ES: I say in that episode that she's raised many kids, a couple of barns and a whole lot of hell, so now we know that Cam has siblings who we'll eventually meet at some point. I loved working with Celia as I remember her from watching Alice as a kid. She plays the perfect inappropriate mother who gives a lot of open mouth kisses to people she meets for the first time, which is a storyline taken from one of the writers' personal experiences.

JTF: We are now excited to meet who Cam's sister might be. We do casting calls in our heads all the time ... What about this person? We've cast Al Pacino in about seven different roles!

Your relationship is so convincing on the show. Did it come naturally to you both?

JTF: Eric and I are so comfortable around each other. We did do a chemistry read in the very beginning but I think it comes down to the fact that we like each other as people. We had that instant comfort zone, which was lucky for both of us.

ES: Chemistry from my perspective comes from a sort of willingness and an open heart to service the moment, the scene, the script and chemistry also comes from a desperation for your career! Like, we desperately realized that this was a great show and we had a great opportunity to have an awesome relationship on the show, so we wanted to make this work.

METRO WORLD NEWS

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2011 SEASON

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  TRANSLATED BY JOHN VAN BUREK AND BILL GLASSCO
  DIRECTED BY WEYNI MENGESHA

Left to right, from top: Paul Nolan, Chilina Kennedy, Yanna McIntosh, Andrea Runge, Ben Carlson, Cara Ricketts, Seana McKenna, Brian Dennehy, Janet Wright, Brian Bedford, Martha Henry, Stephen Ouimette, Dion Johnstone, Abigail Winter-Cullford, Geraint Wyn Davies. Photo: Andrew Eccles

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Early Christmas for Sheen

Porn star alleges actor shouted racial slurs, choked her and threatened to kill her in hotel suite Sheen sued Anderson for $1M over allegations

Charlie Sheen can rest easy this holiday season, as authorities have announced he's off the hook for his Plaza Hotel rampage in which Capri Anderson accused him of terrorizing her while he trashed a hotel suite, according to TMZ.

Anderson had filed a police report accusing Sheen of assault and battery and false imprisonment.

"There will be no arrests made in the case," an NYPD official says.

METRO

Charlie Sheen

Connelly, Bettany expecting baby

Jennifer Connelly and husband Paul Bettany are looking ready to welcome another member to their family, as Connelly is expecting their second child, according to People magazine.

"Becoming a mother has made all the difference in terms of learning to take more responsibility for myself and my life," she tells the magazine. "The biggest thing for me is wanting my kids to grow up safely and have happy lives. To me, that's enough."

Connelly and Bettany have a seven-year-old son together, and Connelly has a another child, 13, from a previous relationship.

METRO

Miley angry with friend over video

Miley Cyrus is reportedly furious with Anna Oliver, the friend who supposedly shot the video of Cyrus smoking a bong filled with salvia that hit the Internet last week, according to Hollyscoop.

"Miley is really pissed because they were close," a source says, explaining that Cyrus believes Oliver had something to do with the video leaking. B

But the Disney star's anger is nothing compared to that of her fans, who went after Oliver on Twitter, forcing the young woman to deactivate her account.

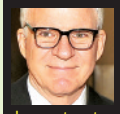
METRO

Celebrity tweets

Simon Pegg **[@simon pegg]** Nutritionally speaking, an egg white omelet and a side of bacon is as empowering as feasting on the still beating heart if your worst enemy.

Kirstie Alley **[@kirstie alley]** I can't wait till you all can see gorgeous Benjamin Travolta...The handsome boy is yummy...YUMMY.

William Shatner **[@william shatner]** I've been told my damaged star on the Canadian Walk of Fame has been fixed. I wish I could replace my face as easily.



Steve Martin **[@Steve MartinTo Go]** Walked down street and no one asked for autograph. Figured out what happened: It was my turn to be not famous for 15 minutes.

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1 LUCKY LEGS

Lucky Brand Fabia above-the-knee boots; piperlime.com

2 GORGEOUS GAMS

Via Spiga Georgia flat above-the-knee boot; piperlime.com

3 SULTRY SWAGGER

Brian Atwood above-the-knee sueded RZ boot; piperlime.com

Who can forget the thigh-high boots Julia Roberts wore in Pretty Woman? Twenty years later, tall boots are back and this time on ladies of fashion – not just ladies of the night

JULIA WEEKS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Above-the-knee boots are big in the music world, sheathing the legs of megastars such as Rihanna (shown above), Madonna and Lady Gaga.

Get a leg up in boots that kick butt

Though thigh-high boots rocked the runway more than a year ago, it's taken some time for the trend to gain acceptance by a broader audience. Now, above-the-knee styles are adding a sexy-yet-chic statement to skinny jeans, leggings, skirts and dresses.

"Every girl wants to be a little sexy," says Stuart Weitzman, a footwear designer. "Do you know an American woman who hasn't seen Pretty Woman?"

Weitzman, who has made tall boots in past seasons, says above-the-knee boots are so popular now because women wear tights with many looks – even miniskirts and shorts. "They complement the new kind of dress that many, many girls are using today. It sort of breaks up the whole naked leg look and becomes an acceptable adaptation of modern dressing."

Options are plentiful. Choose a dramatic pair with a high heel, a mid-height wedge or a flat-bottomed boot. They come plain or embellished with chains, buckles and studs, and with details like distressing and lacing. Depending on the look you want, they can add glamour to an evening ensemble or warmth for running errands all day.

"Trust me. It's like wearing a legging. It elongates everything."
FOOTWEAR DESIGNER BRIAN ATWOOD

"They're sexy and fun and everyone can wear them in their own way," says Brian Atwood, who was recently named Footwear News' designer of the year.

The beauty of the style, he says, is that it lengthens your appearance, regardless of your height. "Trust me," he says. "It's like wearing a legging. It elongates everything."

The public just needed to adjust to a style that, for some, spur thoughts of fetishism.

The success of the high-end designer collections showed retailers that the every-day shopper was ready for the look this year, said Avril Graham, executive fashion and beauty editor of Harper's Bazaar.

"It had been seen as a very high-fashion look and super trendy," she says. "Now, it's so much more accessible. I've been travelling across the states in the last few months and I've been noticing so many more regular women are wearing this look."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 life

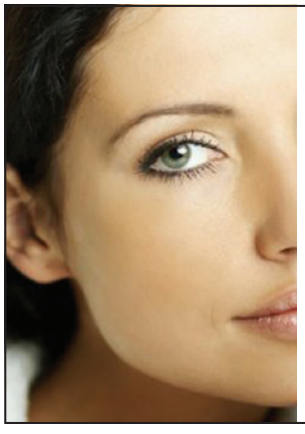
Pumps for stunts

Angelina Jolie had her own request for stunt gear in the new movie The Tourist: stilettos. Jolie did her stunts in Salvatore Ferragamo heels. The heel height came down a bit for the most active scenes, but "she basically toughed it out in her shoes," says costume designer Colleen Atwood. Jolie came to her first fitting for the flick wearing her own pair of metal-tipped stiletto pumps that would eventually become her character's.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ScanLife

Target and William Rast form a purposeful relationship for late-holiday sales



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▶ Name: Mboko Ndimba Mobutu
▶ Occupation: Stylist and Editor of GHUBAR, an online magazine.
▶ Spotted: New York

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RICHARD PECKETT
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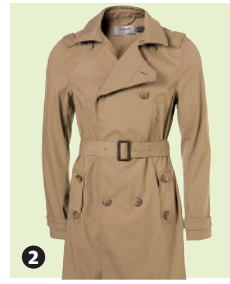

2 TOPMAN TRENCH
$170; topman.com

3 HUDSON NAVY BOOTS
$315; hudsonshoes.com

4 REISS CHINOS
$175; reissonline.com

5 CUTLER & GROSS SPECS
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What to wear in the air

KENYA HUNT
METRO WORLD NEWS

1 A cardigan that is warm enough for the frigid air cabin, but light enough to move comfortably in.
ASOS cardigan, $72; asos.com

2 Shoes that are comfy enough for the trip to the airport and easy enough to slip off at the security gate.
Rachel Comey booties, $357; shop.creatures ofcomfort.us

3 A shopper for your water bottle, book and magazines that is soft enough to squeeze underneath a seat.
Peter Jensen canvas tote, $90; openingceremony.us

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▶ Ben Mulroney

Mulroney ties up the runway

CTV personality Ben Mulroney is putting his own stamp on the design world.

The ETalk host has partnered with Braemore Neckwear to produce a line of custom breast pocket squares called HNK.

HNK will be available at Holt Renfrew, Simons, Selfridges, Gotstyle, Ted's Style Shoppe, Launch Menswear in Abbotsford, B.C., and Supreme Menswear in Calgary. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Madonna

Madonna and child branded

The Material Girl is bringing her clothing line of the same name to Canada.

The collection designed by Madonna and her daughter, Lola, will be exclusively available at The Bay next spring.

The line will be carried at the retailer's 91 stores across Canada with items ranging in price from $12 to $68. MG ICON, the joint venture between Madonna and Iconix Brand Group, Inc., and the Hudson's Bay Company announced the direct-to-retail licence agreement for the Material Girl brand on Monday.

"We are delighted to bring this brand to Canada because it offers fashion lovers savvy style with amazing value," says Bonnie Brooks, Bay president and CEO.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Head Dress

THE KIT

Birds of a feather flock together. Now is the time to show your primp and proper side with a band of beguiling plumage from Toronto accessories guru Headmistress — just in time for the height of the holiday party season.

FEATURED HEADBANDS:

Trout Lake Headband, $45 (top right)
Caribou Lake Headband, $45 (bottom)
Flatrock Hippie Stretch Band, $25 (top left)

All designed by Jillian Wood loveheadmistress.com

THE KIT is Canada's beauty authority and first-ever digital beauty magazine. Subscribe for free at thekit.ca.

This suite brings you to a tropical locale with the comfort of never leaving home

▶ Living on the lake has some advantages, mainly the magnificent view.

Entertaining by the lakeside

SUITE TALK

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

Lakeside living takes centre stage at Port of Newcastle's Southport community, proving that sometimes it's just better to let nature itself be your paintbrush.

The development won the 2010 Durham Region Home Builder's Community of the Year award and the Tradewinds model, designed by Gabrielle Eckhardt, won for excellence in single-family design. The model itself recently sold but identical models will be on sale in the new year.

Meet the condo

- **WHAT** Port of Newcastle – Southport
- **BUILDER** The Kaitlin Group
- **LOCATION** Newcastle
- **WEBSITE** kaitlingroup.com
- **PHONE** 1-905-987-9871
- **SIZES & PRICING** Inventory models 1,772 – 2,642 sq. ft from $599,000 – $799,000

Glorious white dominates the high-contrast palette throughout the three-bedroom plus retreat model home to create a blank slate that lets the lake view inspire the entire home.

"I wanted to create the feeling of an island vacation home. The focal point is the expansive view, everything else is just in the background. When you walk in from the front door, the only colours you really see come from the sky and the water," Eckhardt said.

Bleached cotton tones and subtle shades of chocolate-brown create a neutral backdrop that works equally well in casual and formal settings, particularly in the family room, which features an elegant coffered ceiling with trim detailing, on Eckhardt's suggestion.

Eckhardt envisioned the space as a sanctuary for either a mature or retired couple who love to invite friends and family over often and are enamoured of waterfront living. Accents of driftwood and woven bamboo chairs give the home an almost Bahamas-like feel, which matches well with the more classically themed decor.

"I saw this as a house where there is definitely a lot of entertaining going on. The accents just warm up the space with a few well-chosen pieces to make it feel grand and casually elegant. In order for a house to be memorable it needs layers to bring out the ambiance — this one invites you to sink in," Eckhardt said.

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Rooftop Surfing

STEPHEN DUPUIS
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

2010'S CONDO TRENDS

You would think that with all of the new condos that have been delivered to the marketplace year in, year out over the last decade, we would actually see rental vacancy rates increase as tenants become homeowners and as investors become landlords, but it's simply not so.

Last week, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation released its Greater Toronto Area Rental Market Report, revealing that the GTA vacancy rate declined to 2.1 per cent in October 2010 from 3.1 per cent in October 2009. CMHC expects the vacancy rate to slip to two per cent next year as the current trends impacting the rental market remain in place. Those trends include a slower outflow of renters into homeownership and a rising inflow of new renters from higher immigration.

Meanwhile, the average vacancy rate for condominium apartments on the rental market is even lower, sitting at just 1.6 per cent.

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▶ Neutral tones of green, silver and white create an elegant tabletop for dinner or lunch.

Entertain like a designer would

Tips from HGTV's Peter Fallico on how to have the perfect holiday party

DECOR MOMENT

KARL LOHNES
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

Keep it simple and fresh when entertaining, says Peter Fallico, host of HGTV's Home To Flip; a show that follows him through buying, renovating, decorating and selling fixer uppers. His passion for fixing up old houses and incorporating smart decorating ideas comes through on his television shows — and in real life.

I recently interviewed Fallico at an old home he recently purchased to renovate. Looking around the house it's clear to see that he has a lot of work ahead of him and it's hard to believe that he recently pulled off a fabulous holiday party for 40 people in the old house.

Fallico gave me his scoop on entertaining and decorating trends for holiday gatherings at home.

How are we entertaining differently than we did in the past?

I think we are all craving for formality, but because of less time and busier lifestyles we need to keep things simple. With the trends of larger, open kitchens we are seeing more casual holiday parties rather than using a formal dining room.

▶ Peter Fallico from HGTV's Home To Flip.

How do you entertain friends and family during the holidays?

I held my annual holiday party in an old house that I've recently purchased to renovate. I created an entire evening using various areas of the house.

I started off with drinks in the unfurnished living room, then an informal dinner around the old kitchen/dining area. I then moved all my guests into a cosy den for after dinner drinks and watched a funny holiday movie.

I filled the old fireplace (not even sure if it works yet) with a dozen candles and laid a large antique Persian rug on the floor with lots of cushions. I used the dining table as a buffet table and placed it in the centre of the dining area room and I had comfortable chairs and a large banquettes off in the corners for guests to lounge around.

What's your best entertaining/party stress-reliever tip?

I am not a big cook so I always try to order in most of the meal. I might make some appetizers and a soup or salad; the rest comes from a local caterer.

I try to enlist help; a friend or family member to help greet guests, take coats, help with serving up food, etc. I keep flower arrangements versatile and simple to be used after the party, and around other areas' simple lilies teamed with red branches or holy creates a clean, simple arrangement.

I don't worry about trendy colours and themes for holiday decorating. I keep to white, silver, clear glass, crystal and fresh greens; they are all classics that never go out of style.

Peter Fallico's best tips for setting the mood?

Choose one scent from candles and room sprays and dabble them around the house.

I like fresh green scents like pine, cedar and spruce.

I choose a type of music that sets the tone for different times of the party; classical as guests arrive, jazzier during mingling with drinks and then quieter while guests are eating. After dinner I show off my most recent collection of dance music to get my guest's spirits up and the dancing started.

I bring out all my silver, crystal and glass objects to create sparkly groupings for impact on buffet and coffee tables. No need in keeping it locked in a china cabinet; the holidays are the time to unleash small touches of collected luxury.

For more holiday decorating ideas and tips visit hgtv.ca.

Responsible host

- **Transportation.** Part of being a great host is being a responsible host. Encouraging guests to take public transit or taxis, hiring a bartender to monitor controlled alcohol pouring, have a designated driver at your party or have an extra bed ready.
- **Club Metro.** Are you hosting a holiday party? Baileys Canada and Metro want to help you be a responsible host. Enter at clubmetro.com and you could win transportation to get your guests home safely.

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Avoiding

Season decorating can be more than a tacky tree and a snowman
Try something different this year

Silver bells. Mistletoe. A miniature sleigh with eight tiny reindeer. Familiar cliches surround us at the holidays, and many have found their way into our seasonal decorating.

When December arrives, even the most elegant homes can easily get infiltrated by tacky tree ornaments and plastic snowmen.

"Everybody has a lot more Christmas stuff than they want," says interior designer Brian Patrick Flynn, founder of decordemon.com.

Besides, we tend to unpack all those decorations tucked away in closets and attics quickly, and set them out with little time to rethink the way we decorate for the holidays.

Don't have time to brainstorm a new look this year? We've asked Flynn and two other designers how to create holiday glamour at home without the cliches.

BE A TOUGH EDITOR

"Less is more," says Betsy Burnham of Burnham Design in Los Angeles. Use only some of your decorations each year, just as an art curator might display only part of a collection at one time. If you put out fewer items, she says, "each thing you use to decorate will mean more."

And don't feel obligated to decorate every room.

"One of my rules is there really should only be one 'holiday room' in the house," Flynn says.

PLAY WITH YOUR PALETTE

Your holiday decorating stash is probably heavy on traditional red and green. For a different look, try altering the palette by using only your red and cream pieces, or only the green and gold. Or try "doing it all ivory and white, with some plaid," says Burnham.

Flynn suggests adding shades of brown with pur-

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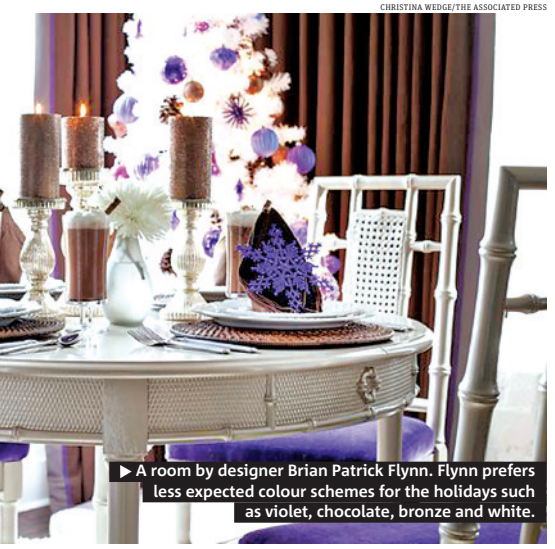
holiday clichés

CHRISTINA WEDGE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶ A room by designer Brian Patrick Flynn. Flynn prefers less expected colour schemes for the holidays such as violet, chocolate, bronze and white.

CHRISTINA WEDGE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A room designed by Brian Patrick Flynn. To marry his home's colour scheme with seasonal holiday flair, Flynn used the same year-round hues in Christmas accessories such as embroidered pillows and gift wrap.

CHRISTINA WEDGE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A tabletop by designer Brian Patrick Flynn. Flynn suggests blending masculine and feminine holiday elements through texture and colour.

ple or deep red to balance "the femininity of garlands and bows."

FOCUS ON WINTER

Holiday decor takes on a fresh look when it's focused on celebrating the season, so think snowflakes rather than Santa.

"I like a nod to the holidays," Burnham says, but "then have a couple of elements that really stand for winter," such as pine branches, birch logs and chestnuts.

USE PRESENTS AND CARDS AS DECOR

Let the wrapping you choose this year bring a new look to your decorating. Assuming you can get the gift wrapping done early, Valencich suggests buying three different papers that you love, then "using the gifts to decorate the house."

"Pile them on an entryway table with some hurricane candles next to it," she says, "or on a side table in the corner of the living room."

Pretty wrapping can be inexpensive (try plain brown paper with luxurious plaid ribbons) and "you get to unwrap your decorating" as you give gifts.

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Add flair to the holiday season

CBC daytime hosts Steven Sabados and Chris Hyndman are known for their panache, eye for decor and festive design style.

And this holiday season they've got a few ideas to help you entertain your guests with flair. The design duo believes that engaging the senses with subtle accents can create the perfect ambiance for entertaining. Here are three great — and easy — tips.

Let there be light

Create a cosy, festive atmosphere for your guests by putting a yellow bulb in your entryway for a warm golden glow. Inside, dim the lamps and wrap battery-powered twinkle lights inside giant frosted glass bowls.

Get cosy with plaid

Every season there is a hot pattern that designers are using, but tartans and plaids are absolutely timeless. Try unfurling a wide tartan ribbon in a mahogany bowl mixed with pinecones.

Eat, eat, eat!

If you really want to wow your dinner guests this season, try making simple, elegant chocolate bowls for dessert. All you need is melted chocolate and a balloon. They're great for serving fresh fruit or your favourite ice cream.

NEWS CANADA

Legal Matters

JEFFREY COWAN
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

LEAKING WALLS LEAD TO PROBLEMS

We recently purchased a fairly new home and noticed when we were doing our initial visit that the basement showed signs of leaking or weeping through the walls. My realtor made note of this and when we went to present our offer, we added a clause that indicated that any leaking in the basement was to be addressed and properly fixed by the current owner. When we went to do our final inspection, it didn't look like anything had been done but we were assured that it had been addressed and therefore we closed the transaction with a holdback of $7,000 in our lawyer's trust account for potential fixing of the problem.

When we took possession, we removed the basement drywall that came half way down the wall and were able to verify that leaking was still occurring and there had been no remedy of the problem. Our lawyer indicated this to the vendor's lawyer but received no response for three weeks; in the interim we obtained an estimate and had the work done.

Last week, the vendor showed up on our doorstep and insisted that he be allowed access to the property in order to rectify the problem. He was extremely aggressive and so we called the police who indicated we should cooperate. However, the problem has been fixed and we want to obtain payment for the work done. What should we do?

The first item of concern is that the vendor is contacting you directly. He should be contacting his lawyer who would then be contacting your representative.

Secondly, your lawyer should make it clear that the work has been completed because you could not wait for them to respond to your request. It then remains to be seen if the vendor will allow the release of funds to pay your contractor.

Typically, you would wait to have the work done after the vendor agreed to the work and the price but in this case, you seem justified in going ahead and getting the work done.

You may, however, have a bit of a fight on your hands.

Oui! Oui! A taste of Parisian flavour

Steak Frites Bistor is a getaway from the city hustle

LUNCH RUSH

STEPHANIE DICKINSON
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

The temperatures have dipped so it's nice to be ensconced in petit Paris. Or at least that's what it feels like at Steak Frites Bistro. The bright space is inviting and the Parisian music adds to the little getaway feel.

Both lunch and dinner menus are available and boast exciting choices such as seafood, escargots, omelette, tripe and Steak Tartare.

I start with the Soup of the Day ($6.95) — a thin, peppery chickpea broth dotted with carrots and green beans. The meat platter, or Cochonailles as it's called ($14.95), arrives next. An assortment of fine smoked ham, spicy salami, garlic sausage, pate and rillette (similar to pate, but richer and creamier) brings the picnic indoors. The server spoons Dijon mustard from a crock and loads gerkins from a jar onto my plate. Merci!

If you want a reprieve from the city hustle, this where you want to be.

Steak Frites Bistro
3185 Yonge St. (just north of Lawrence)
steakfritesbistro.com
416-488-0081
Price range: $6.75 - $29.75
Rating: **

STEPHANIE DICKINSON

Steak Frites Bistro's meat platter.

Butter Tart Shortbreads

Preparation:

1. **Filling**: In a saucepan, stir together raisins, butter, sugar and cornstarch. Stir in hot water and cook over medium heat until thick. Remove from heat and stir in lemon zest and juice. Let cool.
2. **Shortbread**: Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Using an electric mixer, beat butter with 250 ml (1 cup) sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and mix well with a wooden spoon.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk flour and cornstarch together. Add to butter mixture and mix until dough is just combined. Dough will be stickier than typical cookie dough.
4. Divide dough in half and press one-half into the bottom of a parchment-lined 2.5-l (9-by-9-inch) square pan. Pour cooled filling evenly over shortbread base.
5. Divide remaining dough into 4 pieces. With floured hands, pat each piece to fit 1/4 of the pan until the top is covered. Smooth top pieces together with a knife. Sprinkle top with 50 ml (1/4 cup) sugar.
6. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until shortbread is golden brown. Let cool to room temperature and cut into squares.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ingredients :

Filling
- 375 ml (1 1/2) cups sultana raisins
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) granulated sugar
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) cornstarch
- 250 ml (1 cup) hot water
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) lemon zest
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) lemon juice

Shortbread
- 250 ml (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 250 ml (1 cup) granulated sugar, plus 50 ml (1/4 cup) for sprinkling
- 1 egg
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) cornstarch
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) lemon juice

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North America

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INCLUDES resort accom in Miami Beach. Departs Mar 7/ggv/dl.

Mont Tremblant
Air + 4 Nights $539
Marriott Residence Inn Mont Tremblant + taxes & fees $139
INCLUDES accom in the heart of Mont Tremblant village. Travel Jan 23/ggv/pd.

New York Air + 3 Nights 4-Star $539
Doubletree Metropolitan + taxes & fees $131
INCLUDES Manhattan accom. Departs Jan 23/ggv/dl.

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Punta Cana 7 Nights 4-Star $557
Blau Natura Park Beach Eco Resort & Spa + taxes & fees $332
Departs Jan 7/nol/c6.

Jamaica 7 Nights 4-Star $647
Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort + taxes & fees $279
Departs Jan 9/nol/ts.

Valentine's Day

Niagara Falls Valentine's Weekend
2 Nights 4-Star $115
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INCLUDES accom in the heart of Niagara Falls. Departs Feb 11/ggv. ADD Light up the Falls dinner package from $55. UPGRADE to the 5-star Pillar & Post in Niagara on the Lake from $119 per person.

San Francisco Valentine's Special
Air + 3 Nights $459
Hotel Vertigo + taxes & fees $169
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Departs Dec 18/nol/ts.

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Departs Dec 18/swg/wg.

Varadero New Year's Eve
7 Nights 4-Star $467
Be Live Playa Coco (Cameleon) + taxes & fees $215
Departs Dec 31/nol/c6.

Punta Cana Christmas
7 Nights 4-Star $605
Riu Naiboa + taxes & fees $330
Departs Dec 19/swg/wg.

Jamaica New Year's Eve
7 Nights 4-Star $637
Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort + taxes & fees $279
Departs Dec 31/nol/ts.

Margarita Island Christmas
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READER'S DIGEST

Fragrant Lamb with Spinach

Preparation:

1. Heat oil in lage pot or flameproof casserole. Add onions, garlic and ginger; saute, stirring frequently, until onions are golden, 15 minutes.
2. Stir in paprika, cumin, corinader, white pepper, cinnamon, crushed cardamom, bay leaves and salt. Stir briefly over moderate heat, then stir in yogourt and water.
3. Add lamb, mix well, and cover pot. Simmer gently until lamb is tender, about 1 1/4 hours.
4. Add tomatoes, spinach and cinaltro. Cook, stirring, until spinach has wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Taste for seasoning and remove bay leaf. Serve.

RECIPIE COURTESY OF READER'S DIGEST

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 5 cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 1 red chili pepper, seeded
- 2 tsp paprika
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Seeds from 8 cardamon pods, crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt to taste
- 1 cup plain nonfat yogourt
- 2/3 cup water
- 500 g lean boneless lamb, cubed
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 250 g fresh baby spinach
- 4 tbsp chopped cilantro

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Barker will pull double duty for Double Blue

Jim Barker officially added the GM duties to his job title yesterday when the CFL club announced it wouldn't be offering Adam Rita, its GM and vice-president of football operations, a new contract after his current deal expires Jan. 1.

The move makes Barker the first Argos executive to assume both head coach and GM positions since Michael Clemons did in 2003. He joins CFL veterans Wally Buono of the B.C. Lions and John Hufnagel of the Calgary Stampeders as the only league officials to hold down the two posts.

Barker said he's prepared to handle the two jobs simultaneously because he has experience doing both. A longtime CFL head coach and assistant, Barker also served as Calgary's GM from 2005-07 before being named its senior vice-president of football operations and player-personnel director in 2008. Barker left the Stampeders to rejoin the Argos — he served as Torontos head coach in 1999 — in February.

"I've spent over 30 years on the sidelines becoming as good a coach as I can be and spent five years being immersed in being a GM and in the business side of it and I think that's important," he said.

Barker's promotion wasn't surprising. There had been talk since Barker joined the Argos in the offseason that Rita's days with the club were numbered.

But Barker, who left a front-office job with the Stampeders to coach in Toronto, said his desire was always to return to coaching.

The Argos succeeded under Barker, who led them to a 9-9 record and third spot in the East Division after the club won just seven games the previous two seasons combined.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

JOHN ULAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dion Phaneuf celebrates his goal with Phil Kessel against the Oilers Tuesday night.

Family first for Phaneuf

Leaf captain misses practice to attend grandmother's funeral ◐ 'He was a guy who never wanted to leave. He wanted to stay here,' says Flames Olli Jokinen

How Dion Phaneuf will feel about wearing a Maple Leaf jersey in Calgary is a mystery.

The Maple Leafs practised at the Scotiabank Saddledome yesterday without their captain. He had flown to Prince Edward Island for the funeral of his grandmother, Roma, who died Saturday at the age of 83.

Head coach Ron Wilson said Phaneuf would return to Calgary last night.

Once the future of the Flames' blue-line, Phaneuf will play his first game in Calgary tonight since he was dealt to Toronto on Jan. 31 in a multi-player deal.

40 Phaneuf scored his first goal of the season against the Oilers Tuesday. He has three goals and 13 assists in his 40 games as Leaf. He is minus-5 so far this season.

Leafs forward Kris Versteeg provided some levity at practice by wearing a Phaneuf mask on his face during warmup. He mimicked Phaneuf's warmup routine and shooting style.

"Hopefully, when he sees it, he laughs," Versteeg said.

Phaneuf's reception at the Saddledome will likely be mixed. He didn't ask for a trade and showed rare genuine emotion when he was dealt. Phaneuf generated offence from the back end, delivered highlight-reel hits and gave the club star power.

But Phaneuf's defensive lapses, which could be forgiven earlier in his career, became more glaring and frustrating his fourth season in the league.

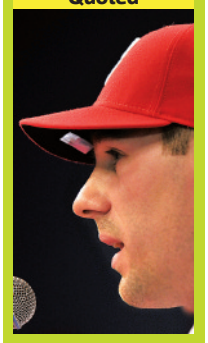
That, combined with a drop-off in his offensive production, made him a polarizing figure for Flames fans.

"I know there are probably people here that loved him and probably people at the other end of the spectrum," Flames defenceman Cory Sarich said. "What I found most of the time with Dion, it was one or the other as to people's opinions."

The formative years of Phaneuf's career were heavily influenced by Flames general manager Darryl Sutter and head coach Brent Sutter. Brent coached Phaneuf for four years with the Western Hockey League's Red Deer Rebels. THE CANADIAN PRESS

4 sports

Quoted



"It's plenty of money. When you hit a certain point, enough's enough. It's just a matter of where you're comfortable, where you're happy, where your family's the most comfortable, what team gives you the best chance to win."

CLIFF LEE, ON WHY HE SIGNED WITH THE PHILLIES DESPITE OTHER TEAMS OFFERING HIM MORE MONEY.

Booze cruise for Chicago

- Carlos Boozer has 34 points as Bulls romp over Raps
- Sore knee keeps Andrea Bargnani out of the game

Carlos Boozer scored a season-best 34 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as the Chicago Bulls won their seventh game in a row last night, 110-93 over the Toronto Raptors.

The Raptors, who have lost six of their past seven games, were without centre Andrea Bargnani. He sat out with a sore left knee, a problem that has been bothering him for the past two weeks.

Starting point guard Jose Calderon also missed his fourth consecutive game with a sore left foot.

Leandro Barbosa led Toronto with 21 points off the bench. Jerryd Bayless added 20 while DeMar DeRozan and Joey Dorsey each chipped in with 12.

BULLS	RAPTORS
110	93

Luol Deng added 19 points for Chicago, Kyle Korver had 13 off the bench and Joakim Noah scored 11 to go with 11 rebounds.

The Bulls led by 27 entering the fourth quarter before the Raptors went on a 11-0 run early in the quarter, capped by Barbosa's lay-up to make it a 93-76 game. They got to within 15 with six minutes to play. Julian Wright's three-pointer brought the Raptors to within 12 points in the final two minutes but they couldn't get any closer and the game ended to a smattering of boos.

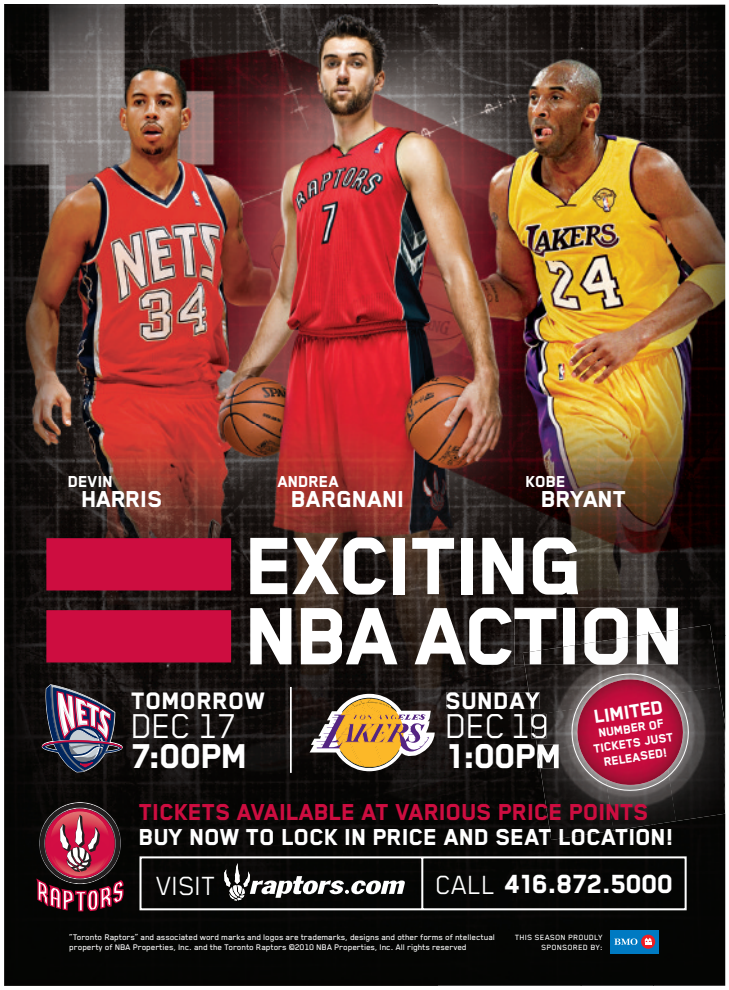
The Raptors (9-17) came back from a 25-point disadvantage in the third quarter last Saturday to win in Detroit. But they never threatened to rally last night against the Bulls (16-8), especially without Bargnani and Calderon.

Bargnani's injury was to be evaluated last night and it wasn't certain how long he might be out.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ Joey Dorsey tries to guard Chicago power forward Carlos Boozer without much success last night.



More trouble for Jets assistant

The New York Jets suspended assistant coach Sal Alosi indefinitely yesterday after he acknowledged he ordered five inactive players to form a wall along the sideline for a punt return, during which he tripped a Miami Dolphins player.

General manager Mike Tannenbaum said yesterday that Alosi, the team's strength and conditioning coach, did not initially volunteer during the investigation Monday that he told players to stand that way.

"As we continued our investigation, we discovered some new information," Tannenbaum said in a conference call from the NFL owners meetings in Dallas. "And the players at the Miami game were instructed by Sal to stand where they were to force the runner in the game to run around them."

Tight end Jeff Cumberland, who was inactive Sunday, said it was nothing new for the players to line up next to each other as they did against the Dolphins.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A lot still up in the air in NFL

Dizzying array of playoff possibilities as season enters final stretch

Five division leaders can clinch playoff berths this weekend, and the Patriots and Steelers can secure first-round byes in the AFC.

Pittsburgh and Jacksonville in the AFC, Atlanta, Chicago and the New York Giants in the NFC all are in position to earn postseason spots. The Jaguars simply have to win at Indianapolis to take the AFC South.

New England wins the AFC East and earns a bye if it wins at home against Green Bay and the Jets lose at Pittsburgh. The Patriots were the first team to clinch a playoff berth last week.

The Steelers get the AFC North crown with a win and a Baltimore loss, and also can grab a bye if the Steelers have the strength of victory tiebreaker over the Ravens and Jaguars after this weekend's games.

If Chicago wins Monday night at Minnesota and Green Bay loses, the Bears take the NFC North.

Atlanta, which leads the NFC South by one game over New Orleans, makes the playoffs with a victory or a tie at Seattle. The Falcons get in even if they lose if the Giants fall to Philadelphia or tie, or the Bears lose or tie, or Green Bay loses or ties.

For the Giants to qualify, they must beat the Eagles at the Meadowlands — the teams currently are tied atop the NFC East at 9-4 — and have Chicago, Green Bay and Tampa Bay (home for Detroit) all lose, plus clinch the strength of victory component over the Buccaneers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JARED WICKERHAM/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Antwaan Randle El can help the Steelers clinch a playoff bye this weekend.

Canadians think large for Buffalo

Canada's world junior hockey team may not include any big names but it certainly has some big players.

Coach Dave Cameron and the Hockey Canada staff named their 22-man squad yesterday and it features plenty of beef up front and on defence. Five of the seven defencemen and seven of the 13 forwards are six foot two or taller. That's not counting winger Marcus Foligno, who is listed at six foot one and a half.

"You don't realize it until you stand beside them, but this is a big team," said Kevin Prendergast, the former Edmonton Oilers executive who is now head scout for Canada's national teams. "We're going to need it. The Americans are going to be huge and the Russians will be strong. That's why we (also) went with the older guys."

Cameron and his staff were up past midnight making decisions on which final nine players to cut from a three-day selection camp in Toronto. The result was a team short on players with star power, like Taylor Hall last year or John Tavares in 2009, but one they hope can score goals as well as play a hard-working, physical game at the world under-20 championship that begins Dec. 26 in Buffalo. Canada opens with a Boxing Day clash against Russia.

Forward Brayden Schenn and defenceman Ryan Ellis, who is back for a third straight world junior tournament, are likely the leading candidates to be named captain.

Ellis, of the Windsor Spitfires, and Tyson Barrie of the Kelowna Rockets, both 5-10, are the only players smaller than six foot two on a defence that also has Erik Gudbranson of the Kingston Frontenacs and Dylan Olsen of the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Owens has backup on comments

Marvin Lewis defended Terrell Owens yesterday after the receiver pointed a finger at the Cincinnati Bengals coaching staff for the team's lousy season. The rest of the players just shrugged.

At this point, it's hard to get upset even when someone pops off.

"No reaction to it," quarterback Carson Palmer said. "And I don't think anybody will react to it."

A 10-game losing streak tends to do that.

The 37-year-old receiver reverted to his old ways Tuesday night during The T.Ocho Show on the Versus sports network.

Teammate Chad Ochocinco asked him why he thinks the Bengals are 2-11, drawing T.O.'s sharpest criticism of the coaching staff to date.

"I think there's underachieving from the top down," Owens told Ochocinco.

"You start with the owner, you start with the coaches. And, obviously, we as players, we are a product of what the coaches are coaching us throughout the course of the week. Of course, we have to go out there and play the game.

"But in order for us to do what we're allowed to do at the best of our abilities, the coaches have to put the players in the best position."

A day later, the receiver expanded upon his remarks, including the players among those deserving blame for a losing streak that matches the longest in franchise history. He didn't retract his criticism of the coaches.

Lewis lobbied the front office to acquire Owens in the off-season. And the Bengals signed Owens to a one-year deal at the start of training camp.

"We all — like he said — need to do better, and we all have a hand in winning football games ... We haven't done well enough. None of us," Lewis said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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d-Philadelphia	33	21	7	2	3	113	81	47	11-5-0-2	10-2-2-1	6-1-0-3	W4
d-Washington	33	18	11	2	2	99	94	40	12-4-1-2	6-7-1-0	3-5-1-1	L7
d-Montreal	31	18	11	2	0	81	66	38	11-5-2-0	7-6-0-0	5-4-1-0	L3
Pittsburgh	33	21	10	2	0	104	78	44	10-6-1-0	11-4-1-0	8-2-0-0	L2
NY Rangers	33	19	13	1	0	100	84	39	7-8-1-0	12-5-0-0	7-3-0-0	W2
Tampa Bay	31	17	10	2	2	96	107	38	8-2-1-1	9-8-1-1	6-2-0-2	W2
Atlanta	32	17	11	1	3	100	93	38	9-6-0-1	8-5-1-2	7-2-0-1	L1
Boston	29	16	9	1	3	83	59	36	7-5-1-2	9-4-0-1	5-3-1-1	L2
Carolina	29	13	12	0	4	82	90	30	6-5-0-1	7-7-0-3	3-3-0-4	W2
Buffalo	31	13	14	4	0	81	86	30	7-9-1-0	6-5-3-0	5-4-1-0	W1
Ottawa	32	13	16	2	1	71	96	29	8-8-1-1	5-8-1-0	3-5-1-1	L1
Toronto	30	12	14	2	2	69	87	28	8-6-2-1	4-8-0-1	4-5-1-0	W2
Florida	29	13	16	0	0	74	76	26	6-6-0-0	7-10-0-0	3-7-0-0	L2
New Jersey	30	9	19	1	1	56	88	20	5-7-1-1	4-12-0-0	4-6-0-0	W1
NY Islanders	28	5	18	3	2	59	98	15	3-7-1-1	2-11-2-1	1-7-2-0	L6

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Detroit	30	20	7	2	1	101	80	43	12-4-1-1	8-3-1-0	6-3-1-0	W1
d-Dallas	30	18	10	0	2	86	82	38	11-3-0-1	7-7-0-1	7-2-0-1	W1
d-Vancouver	28	16	8	2	2	91	74	36	9-3-1-1	7-5-1-1	6-3-1-0	W1
Nashville	30	16	8	4	2	79	72	38	8-1-3-2	8-7-1-0	7-1-1-1	W4
Colorado	31	17	10	4	0	112	98	38	8-4-1-0	9-6-3-0	5-2-3-0	W4
Anaheim	34	17	13	2	2	89	99	38	11-6-0-1	6-7-2-1	7-2-0-1	W3
Los Angeles	28	17	10	1	0	78	65	35	11-2-1-0	6-8-0-0	5-4-1-0	W1
San Jose	31	15	11	4	1	92	90	35	8-4-2-1	7-7-2-0	5-4-0-1	L2
Chicago	33	16	14	2	1	104	100	35	8-9-0-0	8-5-2-1	5-4-1-0	L3
Columbus	29	16	11	1	1	76	79	34	8-7-0-1	8-4-1-0	3-5-1-1	L1
Phoenix	29	14	9	4	2	81	80	34	6-4-2-2	8-5-2-0	5-4-0-1	L1
St. Louis	29	14	10	2	3	74	80	33	9-2-0-2	5-8-2-1	3-5-1-1	L2
Minnesota	29	13	12	1	3	71	86	30	7-6-0-2	6-6-1-1	4-4-1-1	L1
Calgary	31	13	15	1	2	84	19	29	8-6-0-0	5-9-1-2	5-4-0-1	W1
Edmonton	30	11	14	1	4	78	105	27	5-8-1-1	6-6-1-2	6-3-0-1	L2

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Last night's results
Buffalo 3 Boston 2
New Jersey 3 Phoenix 0
N.Y. Rangers 4 Pittsburgh 0
Anaheim 2 Washington 1 (OT)
Detroit 5 St. Louis 2
Philadelphia 5 Montreal 3
Atlanta 2 Tampa Bay 1 (SO)
Carolina 4 Florida 3
Nashville 3 San Jose 2
Colorado 4 Chicago 3
Columbus at Vancouver
Tuesday's results
Toronto 4 Edmonton 1
Philadelphia 3 Pittsburgh 2
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Anaheim at N.Y. Islanders, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Boston at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Ottawa at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
San Jose at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Toronto at Calgary, 9:30 p.m.
Columbus at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

FLYERS 5, CANADIENS 3

First Period
1. Philadelphia, Carter 13 (Carle) 19:43
Penalty — Gomez Mtl (roughing) 2:21.
Second Period
2. Philadelphia, Van Riemsdyk 6 (Carter) 2:33
3. Montreal, Subban 2 (Gomez, Cammalleri) 18:09 (pp)
Penalties — Gorges Mtl (tripping) 12:26, Pronger Pha (hooking) 6:51, Coburn Pha (roughing) 17:46.
Third Period
4. Philadelphia, Zherdev 11, 5:31
5. Montreal, Plekanec (Pouliot, Cammalleri) 7:01
6. Montreal, Gionta 10 (Gomez, Subban) 9:55
7. Philadelphia, Van Riemsdyk 7 (Zherdev, Carter) 14:27
8. Philadelphia, Giroux 16 (Richards) 15:28
Penalty — Plekanec Mtl (slashing) 13:31.
Shots

Philadelphia	10	8	12	30
Montreal	10	17	13	40

Goal — Philadelphia: Bobrovsky (W,15-4-5), Montreal: Price (L,17-9-3). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Philadelphia: 0-3; Montreal: 1-2.
Att.— 21,273 (21,273) at Montreal.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Crosby, Pgh	26	27	53
Stamkos, TB	24	20	44
St. Louis, TB	11	26	37
D.Sedin, Vcr	16	20	36
Ovechkin, Wash	12	24	36
Datsyuk, Det	11	25	36
Perry, Ana	16	19	35
H.Sedin, Vcr	5	30	35
B.Richards, Dal	12	22	34
Semin, Wash	18	15	33
Backstrom, Wash	11	22	33
Byfuglien, Atl	11	21	32
Getzlaf, Ana	10	22	32
Sharp, Chi	17	14	31
P.Stastny, Col	13	18	31
Hejduk, Col	11	20	31
Duchene, Col	11	19	30
M.Richards, Pha	11	19	30
Giroux, Pha	15	14	29
Iginla, Cal	14	15	29
Heatley, SJ	13	16	29
Kopitar, LA	13	16	29
Ladd, Atl	10	19	29
Zetterberg, Det	10	19	29
Clowe, SJ	9	20	29
Roy, Buf	9	20	29
Neal, Dal	13	15	28
Toews, Chi	13	15	28
Eriksson, Dal	12	16	28
E.Staal, Car	12	16	28
Selanne, Ana	10	18	28
Dubinsky, NYR	14	13	27
P.Kane, Chi	11	16	27
J.Williams, LA	10	17	27
Havlat, Minn	7	20	27
J.Thornton, SJ	7	20	27
Letang, Pgh	5	22	27
Lucic, Bos	15	11	26
Ryan, Ana	14	12	26
Plekanec, Mtl	9	17	26
Liles, Col	5	21	26
Nash, Clb	17	8	25
Vanek, Buf	13	12	25
C.Stewart, Col	11	14	25
M.Koivu, Minn	6	19	25
Ribeiro, Dal	5	20	25
Visnovsky, Ana	4	21	25
Briere, Pha	16	8	24
J.Carter, Pha	12	12	24

Not including last night's games

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Boston	20	4	.833	—
d-Miami	19	8	.704	2½
d-Chicago	16	8	.667	4
Orlando	16	9	.640	4½
Atlanta	16	10	.615	5
New York	16	10	.615	5
Indiana	11	13	.458	9
Milwaukee	10	14	.417	10
Philadelphia	10	15	.400	10½
Charlotte	9	16	.360	11½
Toronto	9	17	.346	12
Detroit	8	18	.308	13
Cleveland	7	18	.280	13½
Washington	6	17	.261	13½
New Jersey	6	19	.240	14½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	21	3	.875	—
Dallas	20	5	.800	1½
d-L.A. Lakers	19	7	.731	3
d-Oklahoma City	18	8	.692	4
d-Utah	18	8	.692	4
Denver	15	9	.625	6
New Orleans	15	10	.600	6½
Phoenix	12	12	.500	9
Memphis	12	14	.462	10
Portland	12	14	.462	10
Houston	10	15	.400	11½
Golden State	9	16	.360	12½
Minnesota	6	20	.231	16
Sacramento	5	18	.217	15½
L.A. Clippers	5	21	.192	17

d-division leader
Last night's results
L.A. Lakers 109 Indiana 94
Boston 118 New York 116
Philadelphia 105 L.A. Clippers 91
Chicago 110 Toronto 93
Miami 101 Cleveland 95
Memphis 113 Charlotte 80
Oklahoma City 117 Houston 105
New Orleans 94 Sacramento 91
San Antonio 92 Milwaukee 90
Phoenix 128 Minnesota 122
Dallas 103 Portland 98
Tuesday's results
Charlotte 97 Toronto 91
Philadelphia 82 New Jersey 77
L.A. Lakers 103 Washington 89
Detroit 103 Atlanta 80
Houston 118 Sacramento 105
Denver 111 Orlando 94
Golden State 108 Minnesota 99
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Washington at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Atlanta at Boston, 8 p.m.
San Antonio at Denver, 10:30 p.m.

BULLS 110, RAPTORS 93

CHICAGO (110)
Deng 7-14 2-2 19, Boozer 13-17 8-11 34, Noah 4-6 3-4 11, Rose 3-9 0-0 6, Bogans 2-2 1-2 6, Brewer 4-6 2-2 10, Gibson 3-11 0-0 6, Korver 5-11 0-1 13, Watson 1-4 1-2 3, Asik 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 43-81 17-24 110.
TORONTO (93)
Weems 3-10 1-2 7, Davis 5-9 0-0 10, A.Johnson 1-6 0-0 2, Bayless 9-15 2-3 20, DeRozan 4-12 4-4 12, Dorsey 5-8 2-2 12, Kleiza 2-9 0-0 4, Barbosa 7-13 5-5 21, Wright 2-4 0-0 5. Totals 38-86 14-16 93.

Chicago	23	40	28	19	110
Toronto	18	26	20	29	93

3-Point Goals—Chicago 7-18 (Deng 3-6, Korver 3-7, Bogans 1-1, Watson 0-1, Gibson 0-1, Rose 0-2), Toronto 3-12 (Barbosa 2-3, Wright 1-1, Weems 0-2, Bayless 0-3, Kleiza 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Chicago 55 (Boozer 12), Toronto 40 (Dorsey 13). Assists—Chicago 28 (Rose 11), Toronto 19 (Weems 5). Total Fouls—Chicago 15, Toronto 20. Technicals—Gibson, Chicago defensive three second, Toronto defensive three second. A—17,750 (19,800) at Toronto.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE
KANSAS CITY ROYALS—Designated RHP Philip Humber for assignment.
NEW YORK YANKEES—Agreed to terms with RHP Mark Prior, RHP Brian Anderson, INF Doug Bernier, RHP Buddy Carlyle, LHP Neal Cotts, C Gustavo Molina and LHP Andy Sisco on minor league contracts.
NATIONAL LEAGUE
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS—Promoted Carlos Gomez to director, international scouting.
COLORADO ROCKIES—Agreed to terms with INF Ty Wigginton on a two-year contract. Named Marv Foley major league catching instructor; Duane Espy manager of Tulsa (Texas); Lenn Sakata hitting coach for Asheville (SAL) and Dave Burba pitching coach for Tri-City (NWL). Promoted Dave Schuler to pitching coach for Tulsa, Kevin Riggs to hitting coach for Modesto (Cal) and Joey Eischen to pitching coach for Asheville.
FLORIDA MARLINS—Agreed to terms with LHP Randy Choate on a two-year contract.
HOUSTON ASTROS—Agreed to terms with INF Brian Dopirak and RHP Sammy Gervacio on minor league contracts.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES—Agreed to terms with LHP Cliff Lee on a five-year contract.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES—Agreed to terms with LHP Donnie Veal on a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL

NBA

HOUSTON ROCKETS—Traded G Jermaine Taylor and cash considerations to Sacramento Kings for a conditional 2011 second-round draft pick.
NEW JERSEY NETS—Acquired G Sasha Vujacic and a 2011 first-round draft pick from the Los Angeles Lakers and a 2012 first-round draft pick from Houston in a three-team trade. The Nets sent F-C Joe Smith and two second-round draft picks to Los Angeles and G Terrence Williams to Houston.

FOOTBALL

NFL

NFL—Fined Jacksonville DB Will Middleton $5,000 for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Oakland QB Jason Campbell during a Dec. 12 game.
CAROLINA PANTHERS—Signed LB Thomas Williams to the practice squad.
CINCINNATI BENGALS—Signed CB Keiwan Ratliff.
CLEVELAND BROWNS—Signed OL Brannon Braxton to the practice squad.
DALLAS COWBOYS—Placed WR-KR Kevin Ogletree on injured reserve. Signed WR Manuel Johnson from the practice squad.
DETROIT LIONS—Placed OT Gosder Cherilus and CB Brandon McDonald on injured reserve. Activated LB Caleb Campbell from the practice squad. Signed WR Roy Hall to the practice squad.
HOUSTON TEXANS—Placed DE Mario Williams, WR David Anderson and G Mike Brisiel on injured reserve.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—Placed CB Jonathan Wilhite on injured reserve. Signed DL Louis Leonard.
NEW YORK GIANTS—Placed LB Clint Sintim on injured reserve. Signed DE Alex Hall. Signed LB Kenny Ingram to the practice squad. Terminated the practice squad contract of DT Joe Joseph.
NEW YORK JETS—Extended season suspension of assistant coach Sal Alosi to indefinite, after discovering he ordered five inactive players to form a wall along the sideline for a punt return, during which he tripped a Miami Dolphins player during a Dec. 12 game.
TENNESSEE TITANS—Placed DT Tony Brown on injured reserve. Signed C Kevin Matthews from the practice squad.

CFL

EDMONTON ESKIMOS—Named Rick Campbell assistant head coach and special teams coordinator, Rich Stubler defensive coordinator and Kit Lathtrop defensive line coach. Announced defensive line coach Mike Walker will not return for the 2011 season.

HOCKEY

NHL

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS—Recalled F Jeremy Morin from Rockford (AHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS—Activated LW Kristian Huselius from the injured list. Placed C Derek MacKenzie on the injured list.
WASHINGTON CAPITALS—Recalled RW Andrew Gordon and C Jay Beagle from Hershey (AHL). Assigned D Brian Fahey to Hershey.

AHL

LEAGUE OFFICE—Suspended Wilkes-Barre/Scranton D Robert Bortuzzo and RW Jesse Boulerice and Norfolk LW Stefano Giliati each for one game as a result of their actions in a Dec. 11 game between the teams.
SAN ANTONIO RAMPAGE—Recalled C Tyler Mosienko from Las Vegas (ECHL).

ECHL

READING ROYALS—Announced F Ryan Cruthers has been returned to the team by Lake Erie (AHL).
VICTORIA SALMON KINGS—Signed F Tim Kraus.

HOCKEY

CANADA'S WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY ROSTER

Canada's team for the world junior hockey championship Dec. 26, 2010-Jan. 5, 2011 in Buffalo and Lewiston, N.Y. (with hometown, team and league):
Goaltenders
Mark Visentin, Waterdown, Ont. Niagara (OHL); Olivier Roy, Causapscal, Que., Acadie-Bathurst (QMJHL).
Defencemen
Jared Cowen, Allan, Sask., Spokane (WHL); Simon Despres, Laval, Que., Saint John (QMJHL); Dylan Olsen, Calgary, Minnesota-Duluth (NCAA); Erik Gudbranson, Orleans, Ont., Kingston (OHL); Ryan Ellis, Freelton, Ont., Windsor (OHL); Tyson Barrie, Victoria, Kelowna (WHL); Calvin de Haan, Carp, Ont., Oshawa (OHL).
Forwards
Sean Couturier, Bathurst, N.B., Drummondville (QMJHL); Jaden Schwartz, Emerald Park, Sask., Colorado College (NCAA); Zack Kassian, LaSalle, Ont., Windsor (OHL); Brayden Schenn, Saskatoon, Brandon (WHL); Casey Cizikas, Mississauga, Ont., Mississauga St. Michael's (OHL); Quinton Howden, Oak Bank, Man., Moose Jaw (WHL); Curtis Hamilton, Kelowna, B.C., Saskatoon (WHL); Marcus Foligno, Sudbury, Ont., Sudbury (OHL); Ryan Johansen, Port Moody, B.C., Portland (WHL); Louis Leblanc, Point-Claire, Que., Montreal (QMJHL); Cody Eakin, Winnipeg, Swift Current (WHL); Carter Ashton, Saskatoon, Tri-City (WHL); Brett Connolly, Port Hardy, B.C., Prince George (WHL).
Head Coach: Dave Cameron, Charlottetown, Mississauga St. Michaels(OHL).
Assistant Coaches: George Burnett, Port Perry, Ont., Belleville (OHL); Andre Tourigny, Nicolet, Que., Rouyn-Noranda Huskies (QMJHL); Ryan Huska, Cranbrook, B.C., Kelowna Rockets (WHL).

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	11	2	0	.846	415	276
N.Y. Jets	9	4	0	.692	273	242
Miami	7	6	0	.538	225	244
Buffalo	3	10	0	.231	256	339

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	5	0	.615	295	331
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	347	318
Houston	5	8	0	.385	316	355
Tennessee	5	8	0	.385	291	265

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	290	198
Baltimore	9	4	0	.692	294	229
Cleveland	5	8	0	.385	235	252
Cincinnati	2	11	0	.154	262	345

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	5	0	.615	295	268
San Diego	7	6	0	.538	354	253
Oakland	6	7	0	.462	314	307
Denver	3	10	0	.231	269	376

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
N.Y. Giants	9	4	0	.692	329	250
Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	374	308
Washington	5	8	0	.385	238	310
Dallas	4	9	0	.308	321	366

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	11	2	0	.846	335	243
New Orleans	10	3	0	.769	330	240
Tampa Bay	8	5	0	.615	260	267
Carolina	1	12	0	.077	164	338

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	9	4	0	.692	253	228
Green Bay	8	5	0	.615	306	189
Minnesota	5	8	0	.385	230	274
Detroit	3	10	0	.231	285	309

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	6	7	0	.462	261	329
St. Louis	6	7	0	.462	245	268
San Francisco	5	8	0	.385	243	280
Arizona	4	9	0	.308	243	351

x — clinched playoff berth.

WEEK 15

Tonight's game
(All times Eastern)
San Francisco at San Diego, 8:20 p.m.
Sunday's games
Kansas City at St. Louis, 1 p.m.
Washington at Dallas, 1 p.m.
Houston at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
Arizona at Carolina, 1 p.m.
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.
Detroit at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at Miami, 1 p.m.
Jacksonville at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
New Orleans at Baltimore, 1 p.m.
Atlanta at Seattle, 4:05 p.m.
Denver at Oakland, 4:15 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh, 4:15 p.m.
Green Bay at New England, 8:20 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 20
Chicago at Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NCAA

All Times Eastern
Saturday's games
NEW MEXICO BOWL
At Albuquerque, N.M.
Texas-El Paso (6-6) vs. Brigham Young (6-6), 2 p.m.
HUMANITARIAN BOWL
At Boise, Idaho
Northern Illinois (10-3) vs. Fresno State (8-4), 5:30 p.m.
NEW ORLEANS BOWL
Ohio (8-4) vs. Troy (7-5), 9 p.m.

Digging out a home

Workers removing truckloads of snow to ready outdoor stadium for Monday night's Vikings game

Backed by fleets of dump trucks, dozens of workers attacked the snowdrifts covering the University of Minnesota's outdoor stadium yesterday in a determined push to have it ready to replace the snow-damaged Metrodome for next week's matchup between the Vikings and Bears.

With the work underway in earnest, NFL officials toured TCF Bank Stadium to make sure it was safe for fans and met other league requirements. The two biggest concerns, according to assistant university athletic director Scott Ellison, were whether all the snow can be removed in time, and whether the frozen field could be softened to a level that won't hurt the players.

"I'm completely confident we can have a game here Monday night," Ellison said after crews had already removed 26 truckloads of snow and totally cleared 17 of the 52 seating sections.

He said the NFL was developing a plan to treat the field with warming chemicals to soften it, and looking into laying a tarp across the playing field that would have some type of heating element underneath.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAVID JOLES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Workers tend to the torn roof of the Metrodome yesterday.

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□ CONNOISSEUR IN ALL THE SECRETS OF THE ART OF THE LOVE, RETURN YOUR LOVE ON IMMEDIATELY.
□ SPIRITUAL SANACIONES AND EXORSISMOS.
□ WE CLEAN HOUSES AND BUSINESS.
□ I DO NOT HAVE MARGIN OF ERROR.
□ 33 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.
□ I AM RIGHT WHERE OTHERS FAIL.
□ "ANY PROBLEM HAS SOLUTION"
□ "ANY ILLNESS HAS HEALING"
Shaman
That there exist, I separated from my husband through negative energies made by his secretary, but thanks to the INDIAN SHAMAN who with his prayers eliminated everything that these person had done wrong, today we are happy and nobody can separate us. Lyly
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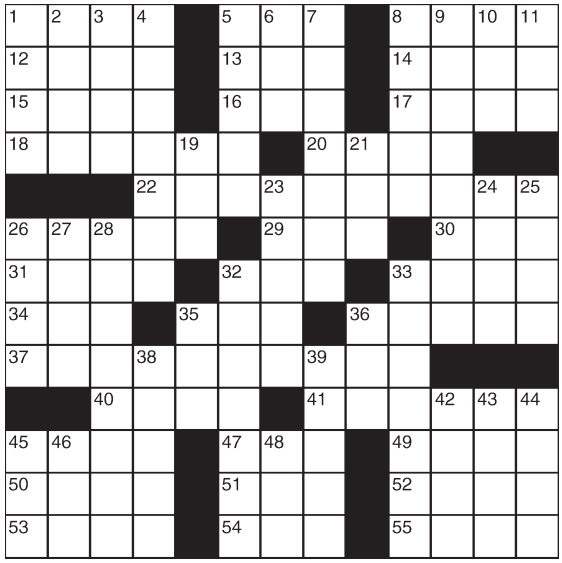
Crossword



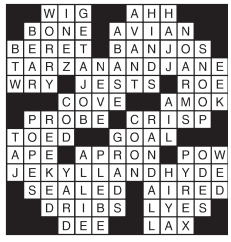
Across

1 Makes a decision
5 Blond shade
8 Old fogy
12 Tree anchor
13 — out a living
14 Grand story
15 Chimney channel
16 Sermon subject
17 Small change
18 Precede
20 New Look designer
22 Documented evidence, maybe
26 Lays an egg
29 Insult
30 Attempt
31 Queue
32 Snapshots, familiarly
33 Active one
34 Check-casher's pair
35 Morsel
36 Handbag
37 1973 movie set at Harvard, with "The"
40 Apple computer
41 Orange or grapefruit
45 Land measure
47 Frequently
49 Small pie
50 No stay-at-home
51 Privy
52 Therefore
53 Vortex
54 "— the ramparts ..."
55 Profound

Down

1 "Carmina Burana" composer
2 Game on horseback
3 Go sightseeing
4 Spire
5 Man of morals?
6 Schuss
7 Rocker Jimi
8 Interior designer's concern
9 One at the switchboard
10 Cacophony
11 Calendar abbr.
19 Petrol
21 "Monty Python" starter
23 Archie's wife
24 Enrages
25 Orpheus' instrument
26 Buy, remodel and sell
27 Verdi work
28 Brilliant
32 Flute's kid brother
33 Sang with someone
35 Support of a sort
36 Omega preceder
38 Abrasive powder
39 Thespian
42 Exceptional
43 Incite
44 Halt
45 Time of your life?
46 Food fish
48 Adversary

▶ Yesterday's answer



Sudoku

3						4	8	
	8	7			6			
		9			1	7		
7				3			5	
	9	8				1	2	
	3			2				4
		6	9			8		
			4			5	1	
	1	5						6

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

5	4	9	7	2	8	3	1	6
3	7	1	5	9	6	2	8	4
8	6	2	1	3	4	7	5	9
1	5	3	9	4	2	6	7	8
4	9	7	6	8	5	1	3	2
6	2	8	3	1	7	4	9	5
7	8	5	2	6	3	9	4	1
9	3	6	4	5	1	8	2	7
2	1	4	8	7	9	5	6	3

Send a KISS

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We had a marvelous anniversary, Francine, and I thank God you're in my life. I love you with all my heart and look forward to many, many years of being your partner and helpmate. **LOVE YOUR OLE WILL.**

Tati and Jodi Podi, You are both my sunshine & make my hardships worthwhile. I love you forever and always **MOMMY**

Baby Bear thanks for never giving up on me. You are everything I have and need. You were the one since the beginning. I truly am lucky to have you. **TE AMO, NANITA**

You're amazing, Vivian. Please don't change because I wouldn't want to be with anyone else! U add meaning to my life. If you held up 11 roses, you would be looking at 12 of the most beautiful things in the world. **LOVE ALWAYS, JEREMY**

Today -2°/-10° Flurries 40%

Friday -1°/-6° Variable

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Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 Watch what you say and do today. Your words and actions may seem perfectly reasonable to you but some people are sensitive to being given advice, nevermind criticism.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Resist the urge to act on impulse today, especially if you are bored. If you act without thinking, the consequences could be unthinkable. Don't be rash — it's not worth the risk.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Sometimes you can be too emotional and sometimes you show no emotion. You will feel both extremes over the next 24 hours. Be careful your uneven feelings don't jeopardize an important relationship.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You take life's duties seriously, but sometimes you are too severe in your reactions and make it hard for people to know the real you – the fun you. What happens today is not important, don't look so glum.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 Today, it will be easy for you to reach out to the world and bend it to your will. But do you need to be so forceful? Probably not. You're pretty good at friendly persuasion, too.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Why do you feel guilty about something that wasn't your fault? At the most, you played a minor role. Stop beating yourself up and next time be more cautious with whom you team up.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 Travel and social plans may change at the last moment today. Of course, you won't be happy about it. Fortunately, your schedule is flexible, so don't fume about it for too long. You'll still have a great time.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 Make sure you know all the facts before making a financial decision. You may have too rosy a view of how much money will be coming. Don't plan on too much going out.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 You're moving so fast that you think you're invincible. Mistake! There is an object ahead and if you don't take evasive action, there could be a crash. Slow down.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Common sense should tell you that what you are worrying about is not worth the effort. Even if the worst happens, it's not the end of the world. Stop worrying and start living.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 Is it wrong to be happy when other people are sad? Of course not! You are not responsible for their emotions, so laugh as much as you like. They'll want to follow.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Keep things simple today. Your life is complicated enough without adding more to the mix. Focus on the one thing that really matters and put everything else out of your mind. SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

KHALIL HAMRA/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

WIN!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image to the right and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

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